Atong Ang, Ricaforte seeking asylum in US

STORY ON PAGE A2

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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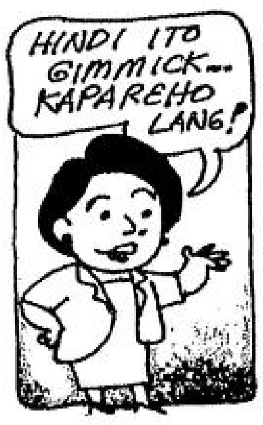

HINDI ITO GIMMICK... KAPAREHO LANG!

Erap stores out; GMA in

BY V. CABREZA
PDI N. Luzon Bureau
AND M. MARFIL

BAGUIO CITY—An old gimmick with a new name?

In yet another attempt to woo the poor, the government

ERAP/ A14

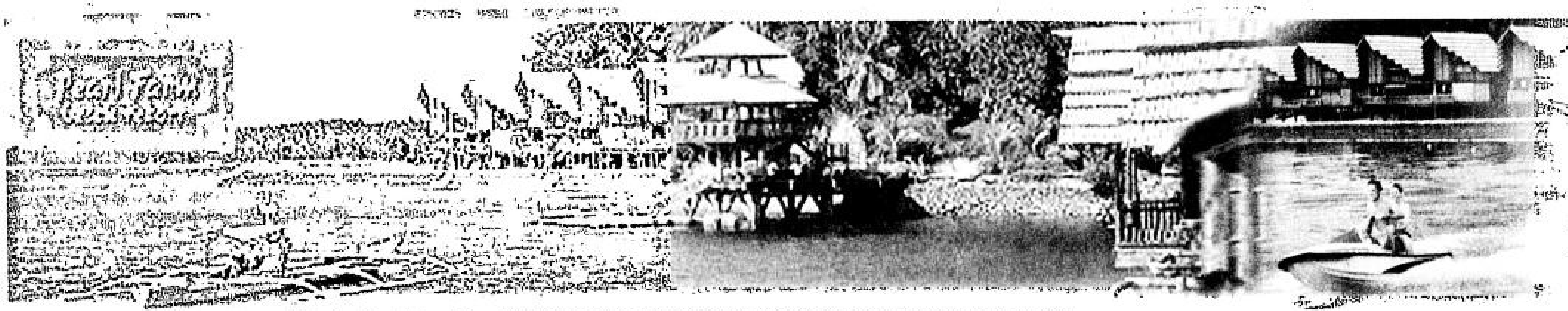
Caltex, Petron hike gas, diesel prices

BY RONNEL W. DOMINGO

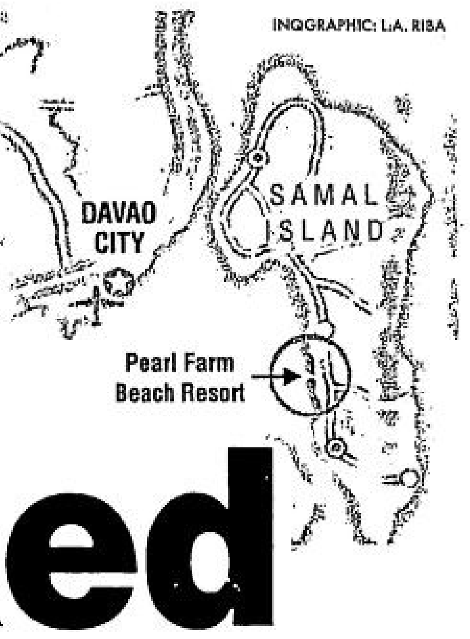
CALTEX Philippines Inc. and Petron Corp. yesterday raised the prices of diesel and gasoline by 45 to 49 centavos per liter less than 24 hours after Energy Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said "I don't believe (a price increase) is inevitable."

An official of TotalFinaElf Philippines said

CALTEX/ A14



FAVORED destination area for tourists, the Pearl Farm Resort Hotel known for its white sand is 40 minutes by boat from Davao City.


INQGRAPHIC: L.A. RIBA

Pearl Farm attacked

Two killed; six hostages taken by bandits

BY JOWEL F. CANUDAY
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ISLAND GARDEN CITY OF SAMAL—Heavily armed men attacked the high-profile Barcelo Pearl Farm Resort Hotel here shortly before midnight Tuesday, killing two persons and wounding three others.

Numbering about 30, the gunmen also took with them six hostages, including two crewmen of a pumpboat that they commandeered from nearby Talicud Island during their retreat.

The hotel's 18-strong security force managed to repel the intruders. No one among the 122 hotel guests was hurt or taken by the armed men.

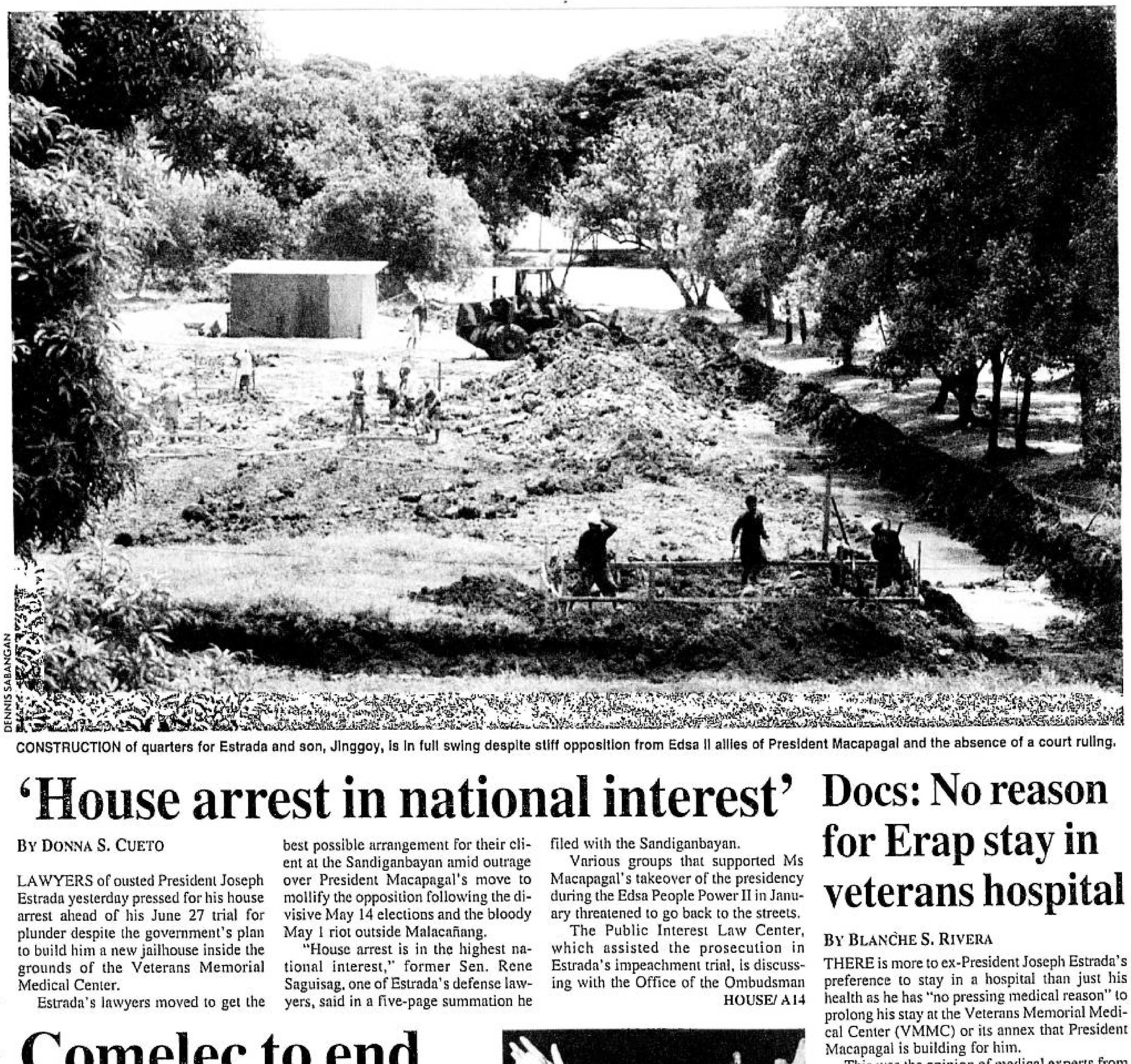
As of press time, the intruders were engaging soldiers of the 25th Army Infantry Battalion in Malinta, Davao del Sur, reports said.

The night attack came more than a year after Abu Sayyaf bandits seized more than 40 foreigners and Filipinos from the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan and from Jolo Island.

All of those hostages had been either released after payment of large ransoms, rescued by soldiers or had escaped, except for a Filipino resort worker who is still being held captive.

In Manila, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the military and police to go after the raiders. She expressed concern that the incident would hurt tourism in the country.

PEARL/ A14


DENNIS SABANGAN

CONSTRUCTION of quarters for Estrada and son, Jinggoy, is in full swing despite stiff opposition from Edsa II allies of President Macapagal and the absence of a court ruling.

NAMFREL			COMELEC	
as of 2:36 p.m., May 23			5:02 p.m.	
No. of precincts: 140,711 (70%)			62 COCs (60.78%)	
1	DE CASTRO	11,213,594	1	8,915,835
2	FLAVIER	8,202,291	3	6,163,981
3	OSMEÑA	8,068,321	2	6,236,381
4	MAGSAYSAY	7,851,019	6	6,060,094
5	DRILON	7,840,229	4	6,099,774
6	ARROYO	7,837,288	7	5,988,662
7	VILLAR	7,683,666	5	6,088,290
8	PANGILINAN	7,602,496	8	5,809,834
9	ANGARA	7,500,403	9	5,721,619
10	LACSON	7,278,706	11	5,602,231
11	EJERCITO	7,233,542	12	5,597,512
12	HONASAN	7,155,949	13	5,571,101
13	RECTO	7,109,834	10	5,649,453
14	SANTIAGO	6,697,667	15	5,157,465
15	ENRILE	6,658,960	14	5,172,086
16	PUNO	6,099,707	16	4,552,010
17	TAÑADA	5,683,935	18	4,150,245
18	MERCADO	5,198,471	17	4,294,677
19	PAGDANGANAN	4,934,312	19	3,584,135
20	HERRERA	4,817,897	20	3,579,469
21	MONSOD	4,699,975	21	3,426,140
22	RASUL	3,572,208	23	2,537,429
23	MADRIGAL	3,503,463	22	2,640,594
24	CHATO	3,368,824	24	2,507,045
25	YASAY	3,274,333	25	2,485,536
26	CANOY	2,528,664	26	2,073,211
27	TAMANO	2,392,686	27	1,736,545
28	ADAZA	551,245	28	517,925
29	MORATO	474,839	30	303,543
30	NAVARRO	447,291	29	317,703

'House arrest in national interest'

BY DONNA S. CUETO

LAWYERS of ousted President Joseph Estrada yesterday pressed for his house arrest ahead of his June 27 trial for plunder despite the government's plan to build him a new jailhouse inside the grounds of the Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

Estrada's lawyers moved to get the best possible arrangement for their client at the Sandiganbayan amid outrage over President Macapagal's move to mollify the opposition following the divisive May 14 elections and the bloody May 1 riot outside Malacañang.

"House arrest is in the highest national interest," former Sen. Rene Saguisag, one of Estrada's defense lawyers, said in a five-page summation he filed with the Sandiganbayan.

Various groups that supported Ms Macapagal's takeover of the presidency during the Edsa People Power II in January threatened to go back to the streets.

The Public Interest Law Center, which assisted the prosecution in Estrada's impeachment trial, is discussing with the Office of the Ombudsman

HOUSE/ A14

Comelec to end count in 4 days

BY ROCKY NAZARENO
AND CYNTHIA D. BALANA

THE NATIONAL canvassing passed the halfway mark last night with the administration's People Power Coalition solidifying its 8-4-1 lead in the senatorial race.

"We should be finished in three or four days," Commission on Elections Chair Alfredo Benipayo said.

As of 5 p.m. yesterday, the National Board of Canvassers had already gone over 62 out of the 102 certificates of canvas (COCs).

The PPC also fortified its 8-4-1 lead over Puwersa ng Masa based on the 2:36 p.m. tally of the Na-

COMELEC/ A4

Jalosjos: A knight to fans, knave to foes

BY BERT LAPUT
PDI Mindanao Bureau
AND ARMAND N. NOCUM

DAPITAN CITY—Convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos has two faces.

To his followers, he is a knight in shining armor who has fallen victim to the supposed evils of the Philippine political system. To his opponents, he is a pest that has brought shame to and halted development in the province of Zamboanga del Norte.

Some observers here say it was the lack of voters' education that led to Jalosjos' reelection as repre-

JALOSJOS/ A4

FUGITIVE from US justice, Mark Jimenez, goes to Congress; he is proclaimed the winner for Manila's 6th congressional district. ERIK ARAZAS

Docs: No reason for Erap stay in veterans hospital

BY BLANCHE S. RIVERA

THERE is more to ex-President Joseph Estrada's preference to stay in a hospital than just his health as he has "no pressing medical reason" to prolong his stay at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) or its annex that President Macapagal is building for him.

This was the opinion of medical experts from the Philippine College for Chest Physicians (PCCP) and the VMMC itself.

Since the ousted leader has been diagnosed with pulmonary ailments, the doctors agreed that he's better off in a pollution-free, rural set-

DOCS/ A4

N. Samar mayor admits cheating for LP, Puwersa

BY CYNTHIA BORGUETA
PDI Visayas Bureau

CATARMAN, Northern Samar,—A reelected mayor belonging to the Liberal Party here admitted yesterday that they paid members of the Board of Election Inspectors in the province.

The mayor-elect, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the INQUIRER that "many" BEIs were paid to favor the LP local candidates and the senatorial candidates of the Puwersa ng Masa.

The revelation was made amid charges of massive fraud lodged by leaders here of the Lakas-NUCD-People Power Coalition against the LP-PnM.

N. SAMAR/ A4

ANO SILA, SINUSWERTE?

Second FRONT PAGE

Atong Ang, Ricaforte seeking asylum in US

By Dona Pazzibugan

CHARLIE "Atong" Ang and Yolanda "Yolly" Ricaforte, jailed ex-president Joseph Estrada's two co-accused on plunder charges, are seeking political asylum in the United States, saying they fear for their lives in the Philippines.

ANG

RICAFORTE

Their US-based lawyer, Donald Etra, said his clients are "not in hiding" as they are not aware if they are wanted by US immigration authorities for extradition.

But they know that their Philippine passports have been canceled, the Los Angeles-based Etra said.

It is the first time that Ang and Ricaforte have been heard from since fleeing the country a day before Estrada was ousted on Jan. 20 during the five-day Edsa II people power uprising.

Etra said the two had gone to see him "several weeks ago" to hire his services.

In a statement he faxed to the INQUIRER yesterday, Etra said Ang and Ricaforte had been residing in the US since January.

'Death threats'

He said they fled the country because of "numerous death threats" that they received "due to the current political upheaval."

In a phone interview, Etra said Ang and Ricaforte are in the process of applying for political asylum.

"Their plan is to seek asylum in the US and to live in the US," Etra told the INQUIRER.

He said his clients "might return" to the Philippines, but did not say when.

"There's been no overture on the part of the Philippine government to guarantee their safety so at this point they're not coming back," he said.

Asked what their basis was for requesting political asylum, Etra said his clients are "victims of threats in the Philippines" and that they "fear for their lives."

In his faxed statement, Etra claimed that the plunder charges against his clients were "all political."

"This case is nothing more than an apparent attempt of the new administration . . . to discredit ex-President Estrada," he said.

The justice department asked the US government earlier this month to arrest and extradite Ang and Ricaforte, invoking the RP-US Extradition Treaty.

In his letter to US justice official John Harris, Justice Secretary Hernando Perez described Ang as Estrada's "emissary" in receiving "jueteng" gambling money and his "middleman" in collecting kickbacks from the P130-million tobacco excise taxes.

Ricaforte was described as Estrada's "close business subordinate" who allegedly served as his jueteng "auditor." In his press statement, however, Etra described Ricaforte as an employee of Luis "Chavit" Singson, the Ilocos Sur governor who blew the whistle on Estrada and whose testimony became the basis for the impeachment of Estrada.

Ricaforte and Ang, who were spotted in Los Angeles early this month, have, along with Estrada, been charged with plunder before the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court.

Only in the papers

In the phone interview, Etra said the two read of the DOJ's extradition request in the Philippine press "but we don't have official confirmation of that."

"If the Philippine government seeks their extradition, they will fight the extradition because they believe there is no basis for that. They strongly believe they are innocent of all crimes," the lawyer said.

The Department of Foreign Affairs canceled Ang and Ricaforte's passports on Jan. 30 on the DOJ's request.

Without valid passports, Ang and Ricaforte are considered illegal aliens and would be subject to deportation.

But Etra claimed that despite their lack of passports, Ang and Ricaforte's stay in the US is legal as they have valid visas.

"They have currently valid visas . . Insofar as the US is concerned, they are validly in the US," he said.

Asked how long they can stay in the US without passports, Etra said "that would depend on how long the US (government) will allow them to stay." *With Irene Andrea C. Perez*

Shoal poachers being watched

SANGLEY POINT Cavite—Philippine Navy vessels are tracking the activities of a number of foreign vessels "encroaching" on waters claimed by Manila in the South China Sea, President Macapagal-Arroyo said yesterday.

She did not identify the flag of the intruding vessels, or say what type were seen around Scarborough Shoal. Philippine troops have in the past chased off or arrested Chinese fishing vessels and confiscated their catch. Visiting the fleet headquarters here, Ms Macapagal praised the Navy for its patrols to ward off encroachments around the shoal.

"And now, with new sightings, your fleet are not complete here because some of you have had to go to the Scarborough area again," she said in a speech to Navy men.

"I'm sure, once again, the Navy would do its work effectively though, under new rules of engagement issued to the defense secretary."

Beijing and Manila agreed last month after high-level talks here to take steps to ease recent heightened tensions over the shoal, which China also claims as part of its territory.

The Philippine Navy has boarded 14 Chinese-flagged fishing boats off the disputed shoal so far this year and confiscated their catch of giant clams and other endangered marine products. Last year, they shot dead a Chinese fisherman after he and his crew resisted arrest near the shoal, situated about 120 nautical miles west of Luzon. *AFP*

Fairway jail can be tourist attraction

By M. Marfil

IF PLANS do not miscarry, the Veterans Memorial Medical Center could turn into a tourist spot of sorts with the proposed fairway house of jailed former President Joseph Estrada as the main attraction.

The scenario cropped up after President Macapagal-Arroyo announced that her administration plans to support the modernization program of the Armed Forces, to be funded by proceeds from the conversion of the 18-hole golf course around the hospital to a commercial venture.

She raised the possibility in her speech during the 103rd anniversary of the Philippine Navy yesterday at Sangley point.

She reiterated her commitment to the modernization of the Armed Forces "within the bounds of a reduced national budget."

The AFP modernization program pushed by two administrations has hit snags the past few years for financial reasons.

This time, Ms Macapagal is pinning her hopes on Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes who, she said, was a graduate of some of the best military and business schools.

"I'm glad that new secretary of defense is not only a graduate of PMA but also of Harvard and of AIM (Asian Institute of Management), because he is seeking new, innovative ways and means to finance our modernization program," she said.

"For instance, the commercial development of the golf course in VMMC that will surely contribute to the modernization of the AFP, including the Navy," she added.

This came a few days after she revealed that the government plans to build a compound in the VMMC to house deposed President Estrada.

The compound, Ms Macapagal said on Sunday in a radio interview, would have a house—for the detained former leader—and a cottage where the former President could receive visitors.

The plan to build a house in the VMMC, she added, was a recommendation of the Philippine National Police whose leadership have expressed fears that something might happen to the former leader while under their custody

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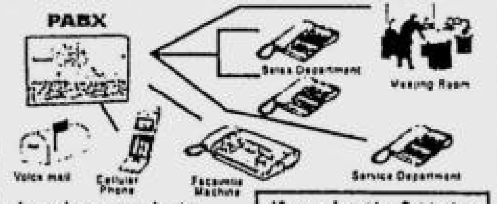

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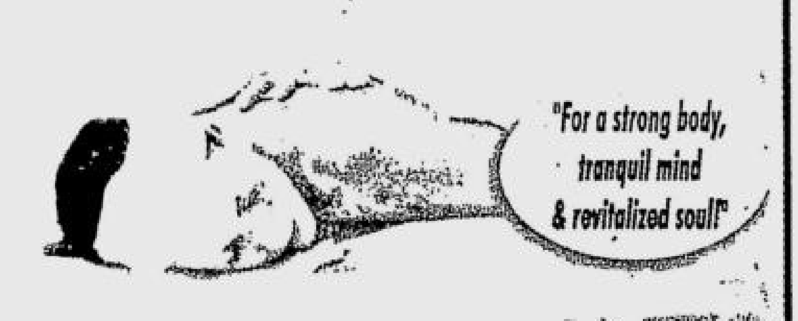
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27 Pinoy strikers return from Brunei

By TJ Burgonio

RETURNING Filipino workers, led by spokesperson Maritess Salao (left), arrive at the NAIA.
ROGER MARGALLO

TWENTY-SEVEN Filipino garment factory workers in Brunei, who went on strike over alleged unfair labor practices, came home yesterday despite having their demands reportedly granted.

Maritess Salao, one of the workers' leaders, denied reports that the manager of the Seri Azhima Jaya Garments and Textiles had granted three of their demands after several days of negotiations.

"This was only a proposal. There's no final agreement that we can hold on to. That's why we came home," she told reporters upon arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday morning.

Wilhelm Soriano, the administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, said on Tuesday that the striking workers had no more reason to come home because the company's Malaysian manager, G.I. Chua, had granted their demands.

The workers were demanding a $260 to $300 increase in their monthly salary; re-computation of their overtime pay in excess of eight hours; and better working conditions.

Salao said she and the 26 other workers who came home yesterday were worried for their safety if they had stayed on at the factory as the company's management had barred the workers from leaving.

"We don't feel safe there anymore. We had to come back here because we feel safe here," she said.

The 27 were the first to come home from the group of 269 workers who decided to pre-terminate their contract and requested to be repatriated.

The rest are now in the custody of the Philippine Embassy and OWWA center in Brunei and would be coming home in the next few days.

The Filipino workers, who numbered 434 (not 700 as earlier reported), went on strike on May 14, a day after they received their paychecks which did not include payment for their long hours of overtime work. The factory also employs Indonesians and Bangladeshis.

Going on strike is prohibited in the sultanate.

While aware of the dire consequences of their decision to go on strike and pre-terminate their contracts, Salao said they had no choice but to resort to these actions.

"We're only fighting for our rights," said Salao who, like most of the others, had been working in the factory for less than a year.

Soriano, who met the 27 at the airport, warned that those who pre-terminated their contracts would be placed in the "watchlist" of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and faced a backlash from foreign employers.

Salao attributed the collapse of negotiations to the management's hostile attitude toward the workers.

"While we were negotiating, they said 'We don't like Filipinos.' How dare they say that when Filipinos worked hard for them?" she said.

Factory worker Mila Manalo said that most of the workers complained about the non-payment for overtime work and not the basic salary.

While the workers regularly received their basic salary of $260, they noticed that they were not being paid their overtime pay of $1.5 per hour as early as April, she told reporters.

"We've been doing overtime work and we felt sad when we found out that we were not being paid," Manalo said.

Energy chief fears blackouts in 2005

MASSIVE power outages could hit the country by 2005 if a crucial power bill stalls in Congress, Energy Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho warned yesterday.

"One of the challenges that the power sector faces today is the lack of funds to build new power capacities for generation and transmission to meet future electricity requirements," he said in a report to Malacañang.

A Department of Energy study showed that only 49 percent, or about 4,816 megawatts, of "anticipated electricity demand requirements for the next 10 years" could be met by installed capacity.

It said the country needs about 9,844 megawatts of electricity to power the economy for that period, resulting in a shortfall of about 5,028 megawatts.

This would translate to "massive (outages) again by 2005" unless new investments are pumped into the power sector, the report said.

The energy shortfall could bring back the power outages lasting for up to three hours experienced from 1991 to 1992 because of aging power plants and poor energy planning.

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Tuesday promised investors that Congress would pass the power sector reform bill at a special session next week.

The President had called a caucus of congressional leaders earlier on Tuesday to convince them to hold a special session from May 28 to 31 to finally ratify the bill which has been in debate for the past seven years.

The proposed law is designed to shave electricity costs by about 30 percent, and privatize the debt-laden state-run National Power Corp.

"Napocor is no longer in a position to build or contract for additional capacity because of its huge financial debts," Camacho said. "It is therefore critical to pass the new power bill at the soonest possible time."

Camacho stressed that power plants take about three years to complete, and that it was important to "determine solutions" now to avoid a power crisis.

Investors regard the bill as a "long-awaited reform" and its passage as "a symbol of direction of government," he said.

"If this is not passed, this will lead to a decrease in the appetite of investors," Camacho warned.

Camacho said a delay in the passage of the bill could drive investors to other Southeast Asian countries which are also carrying out power industry reforms.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said she was listening to investors' complaints of "uncompetitive power rates," hence her concern about having the power measure passed.

The power reform bill is being strongly opposed by pressure groups over concerns that the Napocor's debts, the so-called stranded costs, would be passed on to consumers after privatization.

The bill seeks to sell off Napocor's generating assets to the private sector, freeing up state funds and raising competitiveness in the power generation business.

Napocor has a total indebtedness of $6.77 billion. The debt is expected to exceed the proceeds from the sale of the generating plants, estimated at $4.5 billion at best.

The difference, called the stranded costs, would be amortized through universal charges to consumers, as provided for in the proposed law.

Consumers will be expected to pay 30 centavos per kilowatt-hour for a period of 15 to 25 years from the start of privatization.

The President, an economist, has said that consumers could be spared from paying the stranded costs by tapping the revenues of the Malampaya natural gas project.

The $2-billion project to extract natural gas off the coast of Palawan is expected to be completed this year.

The Malampaya project, owned jointly by Shell Exploration Phil., the US-based Taxaco Corp. and the Philippine National Oil Co., has a reserve of 2.6 trillion cubic feet of gas and is expected to give $9 billion in royalties to the government over the next 20 years. *Agence France-Presse*

'Where's my 20 million votes'

By Michael Lim Ubac

A MAKATI businessman, who ran for senator on the strength of his 20 million supporters, is seeking to invalidate the entire May 14 electoral exercise.

Eddie Gil yesterday sued 16 regional directors of the Commission on Elections for allegedly disenfranchising his 20 million supporters by omitting his name from the roster of senatorial candidates in the May 14 polls.

He also asked the court to declare the May elections null and void and stop the ongoing canvassing of senatorial votes.

Gil said the last elections were not only marred by incidences of missing voters' names "but also missing names of candidates."

Gil claimed to be a legitimate candidate for senator as the Comelec had not declared him a nuisance candidate. He was supposed to be listed as No. 37 in the official list of senatorial candidates.

He said his party, the Isang Bansa Isang Diwa party, which he founded, has a membership of 20 million.

In a P50-million damage suit filed with the Manila Regional Trial Court yesterday, Gil charged the Comelec's 16 regional directors but did not include Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo and the four commissioners in the suit.

Gil also filed graft charges against the 16 regional directors with the Office of the Ombudsman.

"My name was not in the tally sheet, tally board, and list of accredited candidates posted in all precincts across the archipelago," he said.

"How could my supporters vote for me when my name was not in the list of candidates, which served as reference of the voters?" he said.

Gil said he was a qualified candidate based on an *en banc* Comelec resolution on April 16. His party, founded in 1999, was also accredited as a national political party by the same resolution, he said.

He said the resolution had ordered "that (my name) be listed as number 37 candidate for senator and to tally and count all the votes cast for Eddie Gil including all the partido local candidates."

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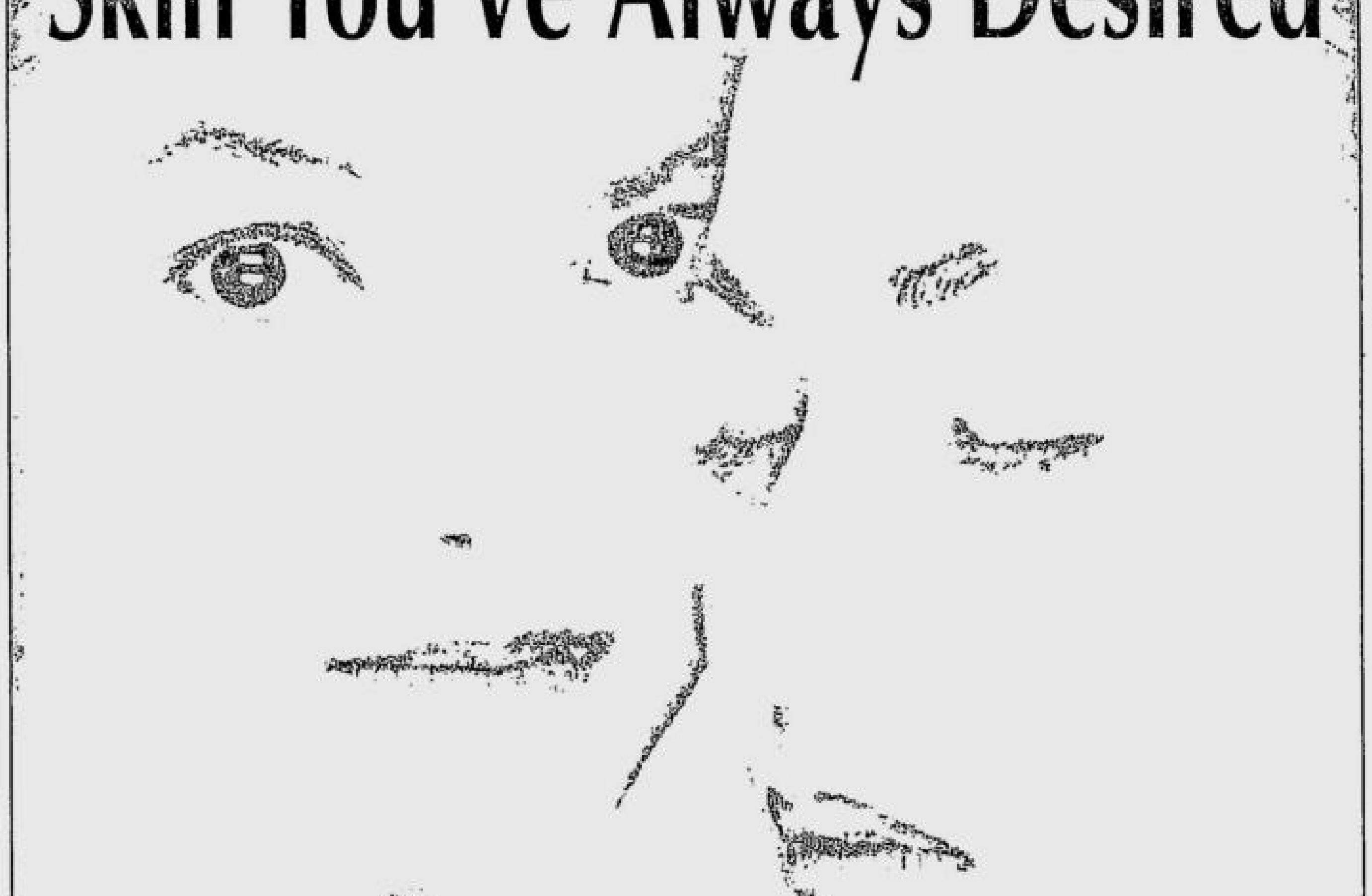

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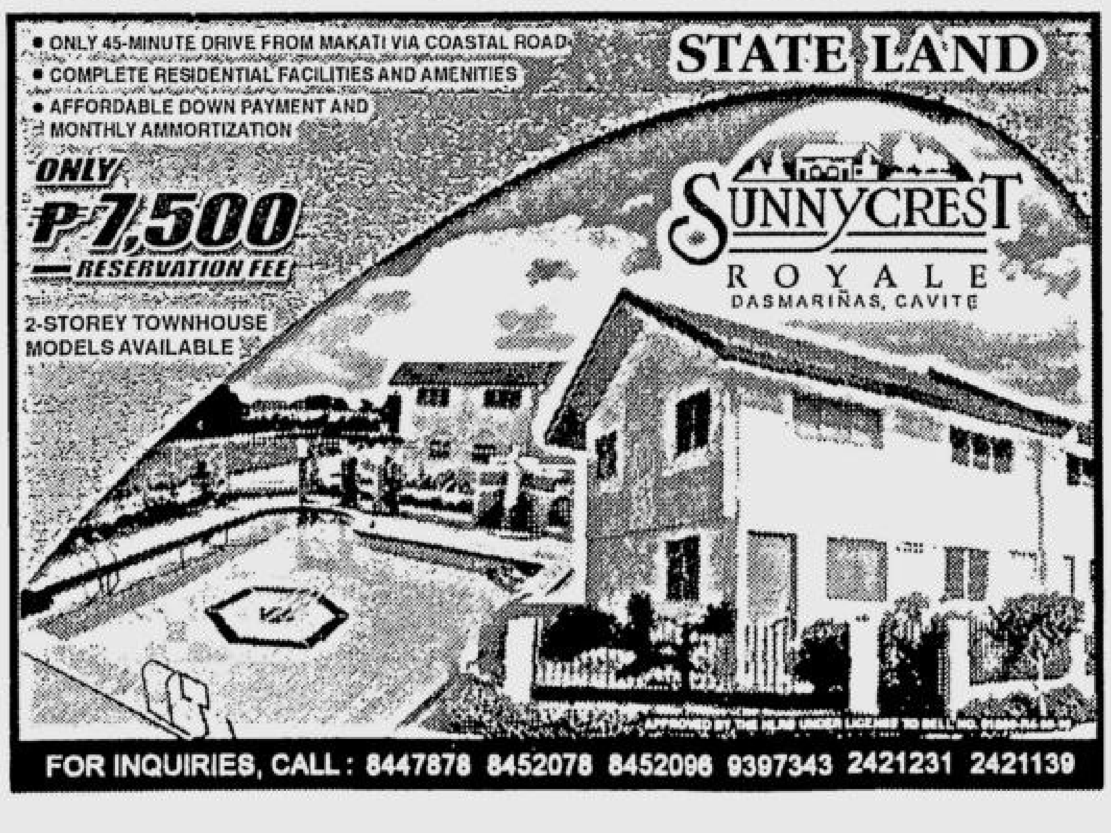

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N. Samar mayor admits cheating for LP, Puwersa

(From page A1)

The losing Lakas candidates here had claimed that election returns were altered to favor the PnM candidates.

The source disclosed receiving P2 million from LP party leaders in the province in March to ensure "the security of all candidates of the LP, including the ones that they have endorsed in the PnM senatorial slate."

The source said they were told of the "election fund" due them during an LP meeting in February.

Now Governor-elect Raul Daza, Representatives-elect Harlin Abayon and Romualdo Vicencio of the first and second districts, and all 24 LP mayoral candidates in Northern Samar were allegedly present at the meeting.

The source said that of the P2 million allotted to his/her town, P1.5 million came from Vicencio and the balance from Daza.

But the money was "not enough to buy votes," the source said. Watchers and BEIs were paid "for their services" on Election Day from the source's own money.

No figures were disclosed. "We gave (the BEIs) a big amount . . . bigger than the stipend given to them by the (Commission on Elections) so we can get better services," the source said.

The Comelec had allotted a P900 per diem for each of the BEIs, mostly public school teachers, who rendered poll duty from May 14 to 18.

In Manila, lawyer Emil Ong, PPC regional coordinator in Eastern Visayas, said three of the 37 people caught by two PPC supporters on video while allegedly tampering with election returns in Northern Samar had decided to testify in court.

He said three more people who accompanied the PPC supporters also promised to come forward.

"They contacted us. They said they are aware of the gravity of their offense, and they want to turn state witness," Ong told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said the witnesses decided to come forward because armed men had started harassing them.

"That is why they are asking to be put under the witness protection program," he said.

'Authentic'

Merlo Tan, a defeated mayoral candidate in San Isidro town, said that contrary to Daza's claim, the video footage presented by the Lakas-PPC was "authentic" proof of the fraud committed by the LP in Northern Samar.

Tan confirmed Ong's earlier claim that the footage was taken around 8 p.m. of May 17, when the canvassing of returns was supposed to have been finished.

A man who asked to be identified only as "Rex" told the INQUIRER that he took the footage from the window of Tan's cousin's house, located 25-30 meters from the San Isidro Sangguniang Bayan session hall, where the canvassing of returns was earlier held.

Rex said he saw local LP leaders altering the election returns, but could not tell who were the beneficiaries.

Tan told the INQUIRER that the canvassing of returns began shortly after midnight of May 14, during which time a power blackout hit San Isidro and eight other towns in Northern Samar.

By early evening of May 17, Tan said, he knew he was already losing in the race so he decided to leave the session hall along with his supporters.

He said that around 8 p.m. in his cousin's house, Rex told him of "something fishy" going on at the session hall. Rex was then taking footage from the window that was positioned directly in front of the session hall.

Rex said municipal election officer Juchita Collamar-Sy, chair of the municipal board of canvassers, was among those caught on video.

He said that Sy stood up and "erased the numbers on the tally board," and that members of the board of canvassers were "erasing" and then "writing something" on the election returns.

Rex said he knew that the canvassing had been completed by that time, so he called Tan and other people seated in the living room to observe what he was capturing on video.

Results of the official canvass of election returns showed that the LP-PnM mayoral candidates won in 16 of the 24 towns in Northern Samar.

Defeated reelectionist Gov. Madeleine Ong and her brother-in-law, Jose Ong Jr., who was defeated by Vicencio, have protested the election results.

They asked the Comelec to annul the recent proclamation of the winners because of alleged cheating in almost all of Northern Samar's 24 towns.

Abayon had dismissed the Ongs' charges as "sour grapes."

'Saddened'

In Manila, the PPC issued a statement by Public Works Secretary Simeon Datumanong wherein he denied having been instructed by President Macapagal-Arroyo "to do something" for PPC senatorial candidate Ralph Recto and to secure a landslide win for the coalition in Central Mindanao.

He also denied relaying such a message to opposition Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, as earlier alleged by PnM spokesperson Jesus Crispin Remulla.

"I am deeply saddened by the unfair and baseless accusation that I have been a party to alleged *dagdag-bawas* operations in my home province of Maguindanao," Datumanong said.

He scored the PnM for not checking its facts and for "putting malice" in his efforts to check on Mindanao projects before the onset of the rainy season.

Datumanong also said the only instruction he had received from the President was to ensure that public works projects, "many of which are in opposition bailiwicks," would be "completed on schedule and within the budget."

Recto also held a press briefing at the PPC headquarters. He said that contrary to claims by the opposition that he cheated in his home province of Batangas, it was he who was nearly cheated of some 30,000 votes in Lipa City and Gingoog.

PPC spokesperson Conrado Limcaoco also said the coalition had proof that industrialist and musician Ramon "RJ" Jacinto, who lost in the congressional race in Iligan City, was also a victim of poll cheating.

Invitation

In Cotabato City, Dilangalen himself denied having talked with Datumanong regarding *dagdag-bawas* (vote padding and shaving).

"In fairness to Secretary Datumanong, our meeting last Monday was about the invitation of the (Macapagal) administration for me to become a member again of the government panel (that will negotiate peace with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front)," Dilangalen said.

Asked for details on the meeting, Dilangalen said he brought up with Datumanong a plan to revive an old proposal submitted to then Public Works Secretary Gregorio Vigilar on the creation of an engineering sub-district for Cotabato City and Maguindanao.

Dilangalen also said he was consulting his constituents on the administration's invitation for him to be a member of the peace panel.

"I am a genuine opposition (member), but at the same time, I am not antipeace," he said.

He appealed to his colleagues in the opposition to stop sowing intrigue against Datumanong and himself, "because we are cousins, we're both peace-loving, and we're from Maguindanao." ***With reports from Armand N. Nocum in Manila; Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Who is winning, who is losing in the provinces

(Due to space constraints, we are excluding from the list candidates who were earlier proclaimed winners by the Commission on Elections and whose names appeared in the May 21-23, 2001 issues of the Inquirer.--Ed.)

CORDILLERA ADMINISTRATIVE REGION	
APAYAO	
Lone District	
Elias Bulut Jr. (NPC)	2,351
Noble Perez (Lakas-NUCD)	1,621
Governor	
Elias Bulut Sr. (NPC)	2,351
Ambaro Sagle (Reporma-LM)	731
ISABELA	
District 4	
(Comelec: Returns from Santiago City pending)	
Antonio Abaya	25,869
Giorgigi Aggabao	20,777
CENTRAL LUZON	
NUEVA ECIJA	
District 2	
(Comelec: 6 of 8 towns)	
Eleuterio Violago (Lakas)	36,580
Simeon Garcia Jr. (Balane)	25,804
District 4	
(Comelec: 5 of 8 towns)	
Raul Villareal	52,957
Gregorio Manuel	21,551
SOUTHERN TAGALOG	
OCCIDENTAL MINDORO (proclaimed)	
Lone district	
(6 of 11 towns)	
Salo, Josephine (Lakas)	22,917
Villarosa, Ma. Amelia (Reporma)	16,013
Governor	
Villarosa, Jose T. (Lakas)	22,021
Quintos, Ricardo V. (Lakas)	18,607
AURORA	
Lone district	
Castillo, Bellaflor A.	
Governor	
Ong, Ramonella P. (Lakas)	
ROMBLON (proclaimed)	
Lone district	
Ylagan, Perpetuo B (Lakas)	
Governor	
Madrona, Eleandro J. (PPC)	
BICOL	
SORSOGON	
(Comelec: final tally)	
District 1	
Escudero, Francis (NPC)	69,874
Gohol, Gil S. (Lakas-NUCD)	20,163
District 2	
Gonzales, Rodolfo F. (Lakas)	44,073
Solis, Jose G. (Ind.)	48,579
Governor	
Lee, Raul (LDP)	141,811
Guab, Romeo (Lakas)	52,008
WESTERN VISAYAS	
ILOILO	
District 1	
(Comelec: 7 of 7 towns)	
Proclamation suspended	
Oscar Garin (NPC)	63,406
Jaime Torres (Lakas NUCD)	59,846
District 3 (proclaimed)	
Arthur Defensor (Lakas)	70,251
GUIMARAS	
(Comelec: 249 of 364 precincts, 68.4%)	
Lone District	
Edgar Espinosa (Lakas)	14,863
Vicente de Asis (LDP)	12,150
Governor	
Rahman Nava (LDP)	24,207
Gerry Yucon (Lakas)	8,887
CENTRAL VISAYAS	
CEBU	
District 3	
(Comelec: 6 of 6 towns and one city)	
Antonio Yapha Jr. (Alayon)	45,215
Jose Soberano III (Promdi)	29,999
Governor	
(Comelec: 44 of 47 towns and 5 cities)	
Pablo Garcia (Promdi)	465,021
Fernando Celeste (Alayon)	419,068
CEBU CITY	
(Comelec: As of 10 p.m., May 22)	
North District	
Raul Del Mar (Promdi-PPC)	36,973
Florencio Villarin (Ind.)	4,395
South District	
Antonio Cuenco (Promdi)	26,608
Aristotle Batuhan (Alayon)	25,046
EASTERN VISAYAS	
LEYTE	
District 1	
(Comelec: 5 of 5 towns and partial in 1 city. Counting in Tacloban City remains suspended.)	
Ted Failon (Ind.)	55,758
Alfred Romualdez (NPC-KBL)	50,736
District 4	
(Comelec: 5 of 6 towns, 1 city)	
Eufrocino Codilla Sr.	34,276
Victoria Larrazabal-Locsin	28,066
District 5	
(Comelec: 8 of 9 towns)	
Enberto Veloso Loreto (LDP)	29,823
Carmen Loreto Cari (Lakas)	32,415
Governor	
Comelec: 39 of 41 towns and 1 city)	
Remedios Petilla (Lakas)	246,977
Catalina Loreto-GO (LDP)	137,747
EASTERN SAMAR	
Governor	
Clotilde Salazar (NPC)	41,229
Jose Ramirez (Lakas)	39,608
Ruperto Ambil (LDP)	33,257
SAMAR	
(Only 2 precincts left to be counted)	
District 1	
Reynaldo Uy (LP)	50,920
Paz Tuazon (Lakas)	50,802
SOUTHERN LEYTE	
Lone District (proclaimed)	
Aniceto Saludo (Lakas)	
Governor (final but proclamation suspended due to protest filed by Mercado)	
Rosette Lerias (NPC)	67,453
Roger Mercado (Lakas)	65,614
MINDANAO	
DAVAO CITY (proclaimed)	
District 1	
Nograles, Prospero (Lakas)	
District 2	
Garcia, Vicente (NPC)	
District 3	
Lopez, Ruy Elias (NPC)	
MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL	
District 1	
Ernie Clarete (PPC-Reporma)	
District 2	
Herminia Ramiro (LP)	
Governor	
Loreto Leo Ocampos (Lakas)	
ZAMBOANGA CITY (proclaimed)	
Lone District	
Lobregat, Celso (LDP)	

Comelec to end count in 4 days

(From page A1)

tional Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

Nanmfrel had already counted votes from 70 percent of the 201,007 precincts nationwide.

Gregorio Honasan and Ralph Recto were still slugging it out for control of the 12th spot in the last 48 hours in the Namfrel tally. Honasan retook the 12th position from Recto who slipped to one notch lower.

Except for Honasan and Recto, there was no change among the occupants of the first 11 places.

As the Comelec and Namfrel counts continue, more reports of poll fraud are surfacing.

Reports reaching the Department of Justice revealed that a "top-ranking, Manila-based" female official of the Comelec is behind a dagdag-bawas (vote padding and shaving) syndicate operating in Cavite.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez has ordered State Prosecutor Leo Dacera to head a panel that will investigate the syndicate.

Namfrel said it had discovered that 1,000 votes were shaved from the total votes for Recto in Basista town, Pangasinan.

The Namfrel count showed that Recto, who placed 8th in the provincial tally, garnered 5,472 votes, but the Comelec count showed he received only 4,472 votes.

In the Comelec count at the Philippine International Convention Center, still leading was independent candidate Noli De Castro. Sergio Osmeña III grabbed the second spot from Juan Flavier, who slid to third place.

Franklin Drilon was fourth, Manuel Villar fifth, Ramon Magsaysay Jr. sixth, Joker Arroyo seventh and Francis Pangilinan eighth.

In the ninth slot was Edgardo Angara of the PnM, followed by another PPC candidate, Ralph Recto.

PnM candidates Panfilo Lacson, Luisa Ejercito and Honasan were in 11th to 13th slots.

Though still in 14th and 15th places respectively, Juan Ponce Enrile and Miriam Defensor-Santiago trailed Honasan by more than 300,000 votes.

In Bohol, PPC swamped the opposition with a 12-1 tally with only Solita Monsod not making it to the Magic 13.

Iloilo voters dealt with their provincemates in contrasting manner. Drilon topped the list with 463,719 votes and Defensor barely making it at 12th place with 174,236

Ilonggos also voted for another son, Perfecto Yasay, who placed ninth, eventually giving the PPC a 10-1-2 tally.

Mandaluyong likewise gave PPC an overwhelming vote of 10-2-1, with only Angara and Lacson winning for PnM.

South Cotabato was solid behind PnM. Only Magsaysay made it to the Magic 13 at 12th place.

Lacson had his strongest showing in Cavite where he placed second to De Castro. PnM went on to take eight slots in the province.

MAD, Bayan Muna still lead

In the Namfrel count as of 5:47 p.m., Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga (MAD) of movie actor Richard Gomez was still at No. 1 with 526,459 votes.

Satur Ocampo's Bayan Muna was in second place with 498, 591.

Bayan Muna topped the elections in Regions 5, 6, 11, 12 and the Caraga Region, while MAD was the leader in Metro Manila as well as Regions 1 and 4. Both groups ranked the lowest in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

A party-list group that gets 2 percent of the total party-list votes nationwide will be entitled to one seat in the House of Representatives. A group is entitled to three seats at the most.

Third placer was the Association of Power Electric Cooperative, followed by the Veterans Federation Party, Butil and Akbayan

Four big political parties were still trailing behind.

These were the National People's Coalition of businessman Eduardo Cojuangco, ninth place; Lakas-NUCD, 10th place; LDP, 13th place; Promdi, 14th place; and PDP-Laban 21st place.

Pangasinan count

Namfrel officials said they were rechecking the number of votes cast in Pangasinan's 44 towns and four cities to verify if dagdag-bawas indeed occurred in the province.

In Basista town, 90 votes were added to Ricardo Puno Jr. (Pnm), 20 to Roberto Pagdanganan (PPC), eight to Wigberto Tañada (PPC) and five to Enrile (PnM).

Nine votes were shaved from the votes for Pangilinan (PPC) and six from Yasay (Independent).

"Maybe it was human error," the Namfrel volunteer said.

The provincial board of canvassers completed its canvassing on Saturday, showing a 9-3-1 result in favor of the PPC.

The 13 winning senatorial candidates in the province were De Castro, Flavier, Villar, Pangilinan, Arroyo, Drilon, Magsaysay, Recto, Osmeña, Tañada, Angara, Lacson and Honasan. ***With reports from Cathy Yamsuan in Manila and Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Docs: No reason . . .

(From page A1)

ting like his original detention cell at Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Fernando Ayuyao, a pulmonary expert from the PCCP, said unless there was a "very, very significant deterioration in (the) health" of Estrada and his son, San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, the two should stay in the provincial jail where they had been kept since their arrest last month

Ayuyao pointed out that Estrada had been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), acute bronchitis, osteoarthritis and emphysema. So, he would be better off in Sta. Rosa where there is less pollution to aggravate his condition.

"One reason you precipitate COPD faster is the pollution," Ayuyao said in a breakfast forum at the Ciudad Fernandina in Greenhills yesterday.

"Sta. Rosa (in Laguna) definitely has less vehicles, less smog, and it is less congested than the metropolis."

A colleague and pulmonologist from the PCCP, Rodolfo Tamse, corroborated Ayuyao's medical opinion, saying that the former President's health problems were not severe. Where there is fresh air is a good place to recuperate.

He said Estrada had stayed long enough in the hospital, and that there was no need for a separate house. The medical examinations could be done in one day, or in extreme cases, in five days, he added.

Cardiologist Marcelino Durante, president of the Philippine College for Physicians and a consultant for the VMMC, said the psychological stress being suffered by Estrada and his son was aggravating their medical conditions.

"What Mr. Estrada has is mental stress. Any psychological stress can aggravate whatever present medical condition he has," Durante said.

It was also "theoretically possible" to "willfully aggravate" one's health problems, Durante said, but he could not say whether the former President was aggravating his own medical condition.

"There are delays in his treatment because he does not want to undergo some tests," Durante said. "Among the reasons he's in the hospital may not be medical at all but political."

Estrada was a "good candidate" for heart ailments because he had multiple risk factors, Durante said. He enumerated them as age, overweight, stress and pressure. The initial laboratory findings also showed his heart was not in tip-top condition.

Should the deposed leader be diagnosed with a heart ailment, he would need to transfer to the Philippine Heart Center, which offers angiography, a medical test unavailable at the VMMC. This would pose another security nightmare, Durante said.

He, however, assured that the former President, who is charged with multiple counts of plunder, a capital offense, could withstand trial, as long as there is no bombshell from the prosecution.

Jalosjos: A knight to fans, knave to foes

(From page A1)

sentative of the province's first district, despite his being behind bars.

In Manila, Sen. Rodolfo Biazon said Jalosjos' case was "a mockery of the Philippine justice system."

At a press briefing yesterday, Biazon said he was reviewing pertinent laws for the purpose of filing a bill that would bar offenders from retaining their posts after conviction.

The militant women's group Gabriela said Jalosjos' electoral victory was "a slap in the face" for women who have struggled against violence and abuse.

"Our election laws need to be amended. These have been abused and manipulated to serve the interests of plunderers, murderers and rapists. Convicted criminals, as well as those with pending cases in any court, should not be allowed to run for any position," it said.

Jalosjos, a candidate of Joseph Estrada's Puwersa ng Masa (and not the Nationalist People's Coalition, as earlier reported), won his third and last term as congressman in the May 14 polls. His sister Cely and his brother-in-law Rodol Carreon were also elected mayors of Piñan town and Dapitan City, respectively.

Vicente Sanico, chair of Dapitan's Barangay Napo where Jalosjos won overwhelmingly, said he believed that the congressman was the only hope for the city's economic recovery.

Asked why, Sanico said simply: "Jalosjos has money."

But Darry Patilano, a supporter of mayoral candidate Cedrick Ruiz who lost to Carreon, said Sanico owed Jalosjos "a lot" and therefore "just cannot break away" from him.

Jalosjos allegedly gives Sanico P10,000 during fiesta celebrations and every time the barangay chair marks a birthday.

Rodalicia Adraincem, one of Jalosjos' campaign strategists, described his boss as the "most admirable political leader" he had known.

"He helped many people. He spent much for the welfare of the district. And while he is in jail, he continues serving his constituents," Adraincem said.

Newly elected city councilor Hermogenes Balisado, a retired government prosecutor, credited Jalosjos for introducing Dapitan "to the world" through his Dakak Beach Resort.

"That's why he won the hearts of the people of Dapitan, Balisado said.

3 factors

A Dapitan resident, who asked not to be named for security reasons, said Jalosjos had the psychological, economic and political factors necessary for electoral victory.

"If you have those three (factors), you don't need the moral aspect," the resident said, adding that the "psychological" factor involved such matters as "visible projects."

"I believe there is a big effect in announcing on billboards what you have done—which Jalosjos did—even if these projects are mostly waiting sheds," the resident said.

Despite imprisonment, Jalosjos has maintained his political machinery in his district, where six of the seven town mayors are his supporters.

But the color of money still appears to be the primary factor.

Cedrick Ruiz said that the votes in Dapitan were mainly bought, and that his opponents had "consistently adulterated the electoral process."

Jalosjos' camp in Dapitan denied it bought votes during the elections.

Senator Biazon said his proposed bill would be different from that filed by Senate Minority Leader Rene Cayetano, which seeks to ban convicted capital offenders from running for public office.

Biazon said he would make "a conviction in the lower court" sufficient ground for removal from a public post.

He said the fact that Jalosjos could twice run for office despite conviction showed "a serious discrepancy in the justice system."

"If conviction for felony disqualifies you as a voter, how come it does not disqualify you from running for office?" Biazon said.

In announcing his candidacy, Jalosjos had cited the fact that his case was on appeal before the Supreme Court.

No way

Malacañang dismissed the reported demand of Jalosjos' followers that he also be allowed to construct a detention house inside the Batasang Pambansa complex in Quezon City.

Rigoberto Tiglao, spokesperson of President Macapagal-Arroyo, invited everyone to make "a very clear distinction" between Jalosjos' case and that of Estrada, who is shuttling between a detention cell in Laguna and a Quezon City hospital while awaiting trial at the Sandiganbayan, and for whom the government is again building special quarters.

"Congressman Jalosjos is a convicted rapist, which is an entirely different situation from somebody still being accused and awaiting trial," Tiglao said, adding:

"Despite all the evidence we have (against Estrada), we're still following the principle that a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty. It's an entirely different matter if one is convicted."

According to Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino secretary general Agapito "Butz" Aquino, Jalosjos cannot invoke the privilege of being put under house arrest because he is not a former head of state like Estrada.

"Jalosjos has been pronounced guilty. That's why he's already in jail. And he was not president, so his case is different (from Estrada's)," said Aquino, a staunch Estrada ally who has been reelected Makati representative (2nd district).

Non-issue

Residency is not an issue as far as Jalosjos' electoral victory is concerned.

Even if Jalosjos is held at the New Bilibid Prisons, authorities believe that he plans to return to Zamboanga del Norte if the Supreme Court reverses the Makati Regional Trial Court judgment finding him guilty of statutory rape.

The law considers a convicted man's residency "a matter of intention," according to Justice Secretary Hernando Perez.

"The mere fact that he is in prison does not mean he has transferred residence. Wherever a convict intends to go once he leaves prison or wherever he used to stay (before conviction) is considered his domicile," Perez said, adding that the NBP was merely Jalosjos' "temporary sojourn."

Thus, no party can raise the issue of residency to prevent Jalosjos from taking his third oath as representative of Zamboanga del Norte's first district, despite a court judgment finding him guilty of child rape.

Perez said Jalosjos' electoral victory was "one of the unbelievable aspects of Philippine politics."

"Only in the Philippines can this happen," he said. ***With reports from Juliet L. Javellana, Dona Z. Pazzibugan, Cathy C. Yamsuan, Andrea Trinidad-Echavez***

May 14 elections the bloodiest since '86

By Carlito Pablo

FIFTY election-related incidents of violence broke out since the May 14 balloting for the senatorial and local polls, according to the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

While AFP Task Force HOPE 2001 did not immediately provide a breakdown of these incidents, the military noted that the casualty toll since the start of election season on Jan. 2 has already reached 100 persons dead.

That made the last elections the bloodiest since the 1986 "snap" presidential elections.

On election day, the AFP's recorded death toll was placed at 98.

Figures compiled as of May 22 showed that aside from 100 people killed in election-related acts of violence, 141 others were wounded.

The AFP also recorded a total of 203 election-related incidents of violence since Jan. 2. The election period ends on June 14.

While the ballots were still being cast on May 14, the military said it recorded 138 wounded and 152 election-related violence.

The death toll is broken down as: 61 civilians; 27 local officials; and four candidates, four soldiers and four police personnel.

The most prominent among those killed were Quezon Rep. Marcial Punzalan and Batangas gubernatorial candidate Cesar Platon, who were shot in separate incidents by members of the Melito Glor Command of the communist-led New People's Army.

The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and the Ilocos Region registered the most number of deaths at 19 and 13, respectively.

Of the 141 wounded 122 were civilians; 12 local officials; four soldiers; two policemen and one candidate.

The ARMM accounted for 39 wounded, followed by Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog with 15 and 12, respectively.

Private armed groups were responsible for 80-82 percent of the violent incidents, the military said.

Private armies were also tagged in 65 percent of the killings and 85 percent for the wounded persons.

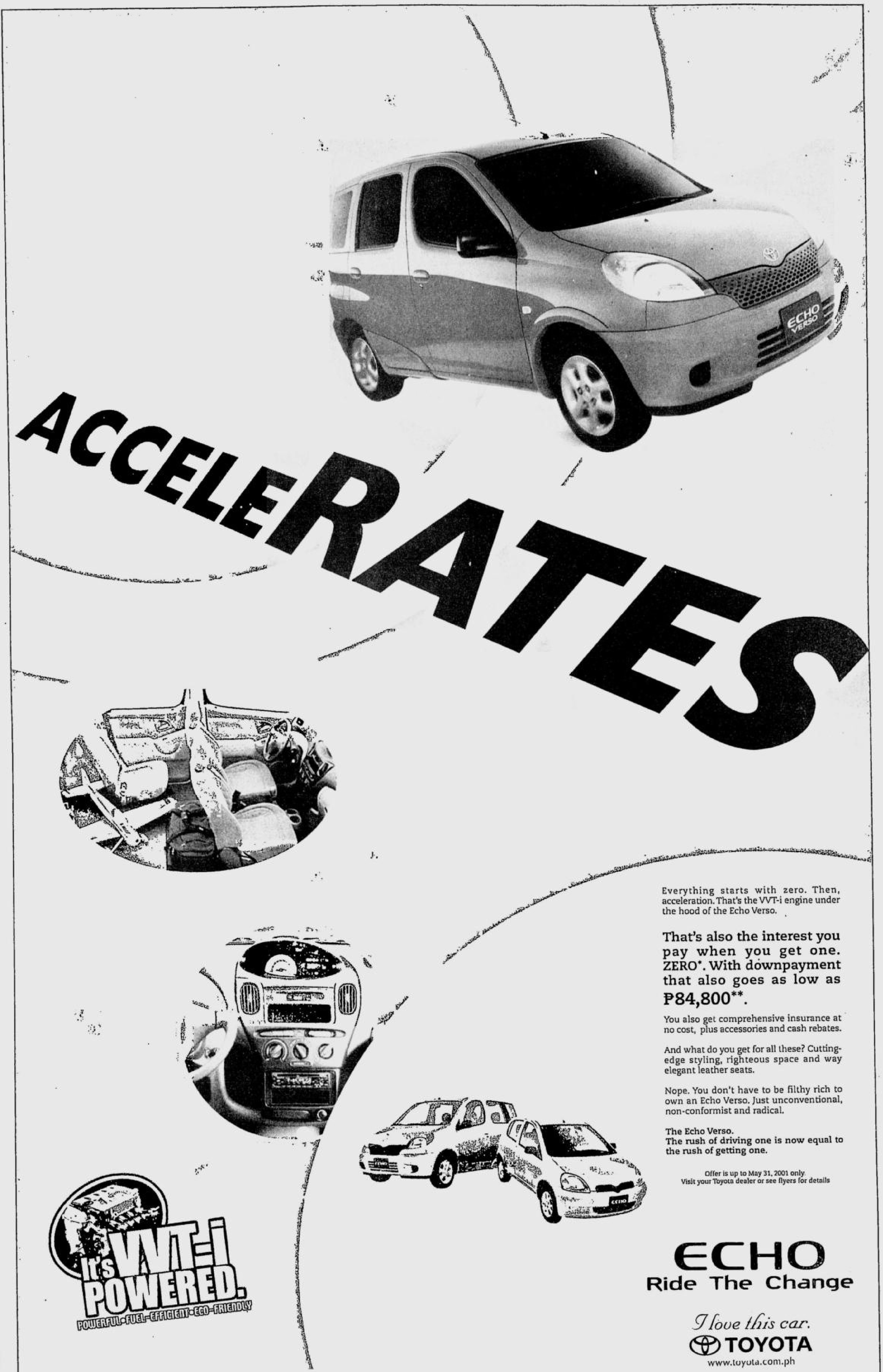
Communist rebels accounted for 17-19 percent of the total incidents, 25 percent of the killings and 10 percent of those wounded.

The AFP said the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front was behind 2-5 percent of the violent incidents, 10 percent for the killings and 5 percent for those wounded.

The present death toll exceeds those recorded in the 1992 presidential and local elections, the 1995 senatorial and local elections, and the 1998 presidential and local polls.

The bloodiest election in the last two decades was the 1986 "snap" presidential elections called by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

The death toll during the snap polls was placed at 153 persons dead.



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OPINION

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The greater priority?

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has called Congress to a special session on May 28-31 to pass the petrified power reform bill. This bill, known as the Electrical Power Industry Restructuring Act, has been hanging fire in Congress since 1995. It failed to get through the Ramos and Estrada administrations, and the Macapagal administration thinks it will have a better chance this time. We wish it luck.

At the last reckoning, it mercifully reached the stage of the bicameral conference committee in the 11th Congress awaiting ratification in the plenary session. All the charisma of deposed President Estrada and control of Congress by Estrada's LAMP coalition failed to pull it out of the hole of the bicameral committee.

The bill, which was passed in the House to go to the bicameral committee amid charges of "payola," is controversial enough to require focused legislative action. And yet President Macapagal has cluttered the agenda of the special session with several other items, including a request for supplementary budget appropriations. How all of these can be crammed in four days without causing legislative indigestion is beyond us.

According to the administration, Energy Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho has ironed out objections to the bill among competing interest groups and is now ready to go to the floor. Whether it will be reported out in four days is everybody's conjecture. The odds are against it.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao has said that the approval of the bill could stop a power crisis looming in two to three years, rein in the National Power Corp.'s ballooning liabilities and, most of all, give a signal to investors that the government has the capacity to undertake structural, economic reforms. From the point of view of attracting investments, the privatization of the Napocor could lead to the cutting of electricity costs by up to 30 percent. The administration has assured us that the government has found a formula on the absorption of the Napocor's P570-billion losses and loans without passing them off to the public.

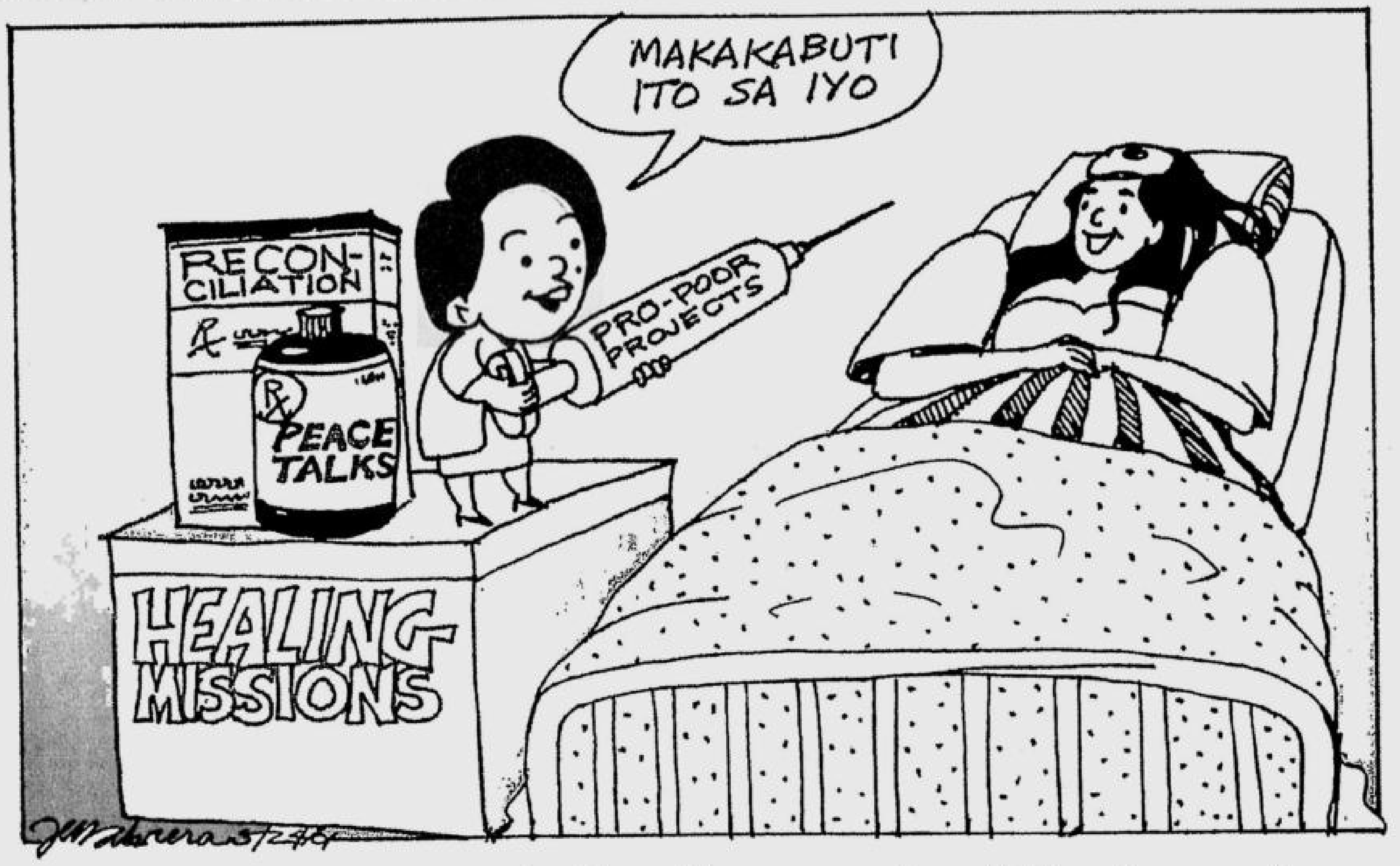
This formula, whose details have not been fleshed out, will certainly undergo close scrutiny in the bicameral committee which is either a graveyard or a clearing house for legislation. The question of who gains and who loses in the bill is still very much unresolved.

The reason why this administration seeks urgent passage of the bill is that investors consider the bill a test of the capacity of the government to deliver reforms in such a key sector of the economy. The government is preparing for an international road show to bring in investments, and the power reform bill is its demonstration of capacity to establish an environment for investments.

This calculation is however flawed in several ways. First, President Macapagal is depending on a lame-duck and Estrada-controlled Congress which, in the first place, choked the bill in the bicameral conference. There is no sign the old Congress and the Estrada cohorts would treat President Macapagal better than her predecessor. Second, passage of the bill is not likely to be the key for the return of investments. The most important consideration is political stability. Instability has rocked the country since the crisis that led to Estrada's removal from office. Edsa II and the turbulent events culminating in the May 1 assault on Malacañang have exacerbated political turmoil.

Until this government demonstrates that it is in control, foreign business will hesitate to invest in this country, even though the government has already shown capacity for rational management and for good governance. A perception of weakness on the part of the government in dealing with challenges to its authority and with enforcing the law in the issue of Estrada's arrest can make any investor nervous. The government must have to do something more basic to restore confidence than lifting the power bill out of its hibernation in Congress.

We would like to see an end to the lengthy uncertainty over the power bill, but we are afraid that the President is pushing her luck too far. She is squandering her political resources in this special session.



Power Bill won't 'heal' wounds of the 'masa'

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is doing two contradictory things: She has started courting the *masa*, the poor. She calls it "healing" but it is actually the start of her campaign for reelection in 2004—even before the Commission on Elections can finish counting the votes cast in the May 14 elections. At the same time, she has called Congress to a special session to pass the Omnibus Power Bill. She can't do both unless she is not sincere in her purported "healing" sessions. She can't promise to help the poor and at the same time have the Power Bill passed into law.

Because the Power Bill will impoverish the poor even more. There are many gobbledygook in the bill and the debates which its supporters hope the people won't understand, but the issue is simple: Generating units of the National Power Corp. will be sold to private groups at a bargain minus the huge loans incurred for those generators, but the people will be made to pay for those debts. They euphemistically call them "stranded costs," but what's in a name? Debts are debts that have to be paid, even if you call them by some other name.

And who will pay for those debts? The people whom Ms Macapagal claims she wants to help. Her administration will tell you that there will be no additional cost to the power consumer. That's a lie. Not only will the consumers pay but even non-consumers of electricity will pay through the nose.

Those debts, or "stranded costs," will be paid for by the government with tax money. And who pays the taxes but the people, many of whom don't even consume electricity.

The amount of the debts is nothing to sneeze at. It is at least P5 billion! (It could be more; nobody knows exactly how much.) Imagine what P5 billion can do to alleviate the suffering of the people. How many homes for the homeless will P5 billion build? Taxes are supposed to go back to the people in the form of services, not to be used to pay debts that should rightfully be paid by others.

These debts were incurred by the Napocor for the development and improvement of its thermal, geothermal coal and hydro-electric generating units. The Power Bill will authorize the sale of these units to private groups. Logic and fairness dictate that the buyers should assume the debts incurred for the generators they are buying. But no, they won't. The government will sell them to the lucky buyers clean—without any debts. They will be sold at a huge loss. The government will assume the loss and will pay them in installments with taxes the people have paid.

This is a betrayal of the people. Yet, President Macapagal has the gall to say that she wants to "heal" the wounds suffered by the poor. She will go to the slums and the Muslim communities and shake hands, kiss babies, pose far pictures, deliver speeches and tell them that their deliverance is coming because she is there to help them.

"By the way," she'll probably add, "you must vote for me in 2004, otherwise I won't be able to do that."

Why is she doing this? Why is she engaging in deception? Because of money.

The International Monetary Fund has promised to lend us (another looming debt) $100 million if we privatize the Napocor's generating units. (It won't be surprising if some of the buyers are American companies.) That is why the administration is eager to pass the Omnibus Power Bill; it wants to get its hands on that money.

But the IMF might as well lend that money to the buyers and make them pay for the debts of the generating units they buy instead of making the Filipino people pay for them. That $100 million would only be a mirage for us; it won't do us any good because we, the people, would pay more than that for the debts. And we would have to repay the $100-million loan, with interest. Thus, we would be paying more than double for that IMF loan if we sell the Napocor at a tremendous loss in exchange for it.

Such a bad business deal won't get President Macapagal, or any president, reelected. In fact, she should be charged under the Anti-Graft Law for entering into a contract "grossly disadvantageous to the government." If that impending deal is not disadvantageous to us, I don't know what is.

Not only that, we will continue to pay for electricity we don't even consume, in fact, not even generated power that doesn't exist. Confusing? Yes, so I will explain that.

During the power crisis, a panicky President Ramos entered into contracts with Independent Power Producers, or IPPs (these are private companies) to generate electricity, with the government guaranteeing to pay for all the electricity. The contracts are for long periods (20 to 25 years). These sweetheart deals are so sweet that even when we already had a sufficient supply of electricity, more IPPs kept applying for more contracts and President Ramos kept signing them. (Shouldn't he, too, be charged with graft for entering into contracts grossly disadvantageous to the government?)

Time came when we had an oversupply of electricity. We could not consume all the power being generated (if we can only export them to California which has a power shortage) so the IPPs would frequently stop their generators. But because the government has contracts to pay for their generating capacities at a fixed rate and a fixed amount, it is obliged to pay them. Thus, even while the IPP units are idle, we are actually paying them as if they are operating at full blast. We are paying for electricity they don't even generate. No wonder the Napocor is losing tons of money. But the Napocor was earning a profit before Ramos signed those contracts with the IPPs.

All these, the government has not explained to the people even as it pushes the passage of the Power Bill. On the contrary, it hides these facts with gobbledygook. Then Ms Macapagal claims she wants to "heal" the wounds of the *masa* as though she were a faith healer, a miracle worker sent from heaven. With the Omnibus Power Bill, she will only make the wounds deeper, bigger, fester and more painful. When the people realize they're paying for the debts of very rich people, they'll be hurt—and angry. Goodbye Malacañang. But at least, like Erap and Marcos, she would land in the Guinness Book of World Records as the president with the shortest term.

Ms President, that Power Bill is a time bomb. Send it back to the drawing boards.

Our southern neighbor's fire

WINDMILLS

Jerry Barican

THIS week, Allen Iverson of the Philadelphia 76ers probably garnered more media attention in Manila than did Indonesia. Except where celebrities are concerned, introspection, self-absorption and even provincialism tend to insulate Filipinos from the impact of important events abroad. Yet when smoke—and perhaps fire—threaten our closest neighbor's home, even we must take notice.

So fixated were we on our electoral navels this week that our noses failed us. Indonesia is in crisis. When Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri warned on Monday that the nation could break up and win the title "Sick Man of Asia" from us, those who cared read about it on Page 10.

Amazing as it may seem, some local observers privately welcome this unsettling development. They see our large and populous neighbor to the south as a potential and military threat. They see in the dismemberment of that republic the diminishment of the threat. It is less destabilizing they say to have the regional equivalent of several Balkan mini-states around than a Yugoslavia.

Others are less complacent. Whatever its internal difficulties, Indonesia has been a good friend to the Philippines. Over the decades, it has played a central and vital role in the peaceful settlement of the Islamic insurgency in Mindanao. It has been a responsible and influential voice in the Organization of Islamic Conference. It has been an anchor for Asean which in turn has been the forum for the weak states of Southeast Asia to deal with their great international counterparts: China, Japan, the United States and the European Union.

Moreover, destabilization would create monumental problems for us, problems we are in no position to handle. Refugees would swamp not only the Philippines—we already host tens of thousands of illegal Indonesian settlers—but the adjoining countries as well. We have a large Filipino expatriate community there whose security would be threatened by civil strife. As governmental authority broke down, piracy and criminality would become endemic. Our Navy does not have the equipment to handle that eventuality. Arms would be smuggled in huge volumes into Mindanao.

But the most volatile export would not be armaments but ideas. As central government authority broke down in Indonesia, the growth of fundamentalist Islam, held in check in the past by culture and secularism, would spread unhindered. The speed and direction of fire, especially the fire of ideas, are unpredictable.

What can we do about it? Unfortunately, very little. Cabinet Cluster E can meet, wring hands and pray for the best. We can publicly urge that democratic constitutional processes be observed. Our diplomats there can put in a word of balm. Frankly, it would all be the equivalent of trying to put out a raging forest fire with spit. Indonesia's fate is in the hands of Indonesians, not in ours.

Since the fall of Suharto, long festering problems have surfaced, especially as Indonesia has made the difficult transition to democracy. The tragedy of East Timor highlighted both the costs of change and the centripetal forces that threaten to break the country apart. The separatist war in Aceh and the religious one in the Maluku Islands have brought these tensions to international attention.

Over the past few months, political developments there have had an eerie similarity to those here. Parliament, which meets in six days, is expected to impeach President Abdurrahman Wahid over allegations of corruption and incompetence. The president has denied the allegations and marshalled his supporters to his cause.

There have been rumors in the Indonesian capital that President Wahid plans to dissolve Parliament, replace the military's top brass with generals more sympathetic to him, and to declare emergency rule. Filipinos would feel much at home in the convoluted comings and goings of Indonesian politics.

If the president were removed and Megawati succeeds, as she is widely expected to as the leader of the largest single party in Parliament, she will be the second vice president and also the second woman to ascend to the presidency in Southeast Asia in the aftermath of an impeachment attempt.

And just as the problems in the Philippines didn't disappear after Edsa II, those of Indonesia will face the new president. She has outlined these to include the issues involved in the transition to democracy, the economic crisis, religious conflict, cultural problems, territorial integrity and defense and security questions. These are problems much like ours, only bigger, as we come to expect in a country as large, as diverse as Indonesia is.

Despite these immense difficulties, there is good reason to hope. Indonesia's political, military and economic leadership, more aware than anyone else of the costs of instability, have followed democratic and constitutional processes and favored moderation over passion. Even embattled President Wahid has so far always backed away from the precipice, calming his supporters and publicly denying charges that he plans to set up a constitutional dictatorship. Large parts of Indonesia are completely peaceful, including that tourist paradise, Bali.

Our tasks are to watch closely, to privately encourage moderation, to prepare contingency plans and to join in any international effort to assist Indonesia navigate these treacherous shoals. We must do that because Indonesia is a good friend but most of all because it is in our best national interest. Otherwise, when we see fit to put Indonesia on the front page, it will probably already be too late to be thinking about it.

GMA caught in a bind

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is getting a lot of criticism from some of her Edsa II supporters for what appears to them as too much bending over backwards to her predecessor. Yesterday morning, prior to writing this column, I got a number of calls protesting Ms Macapagal's stance that she has no objection to house arrest for deposed President Estrada, as well as her move to construct a detention place for him in the Veterans Memorial Medical Center. I don't envy Ms Macapagal's current dilemma, which brings to mind former President Ramos' favorite imagery about the *bibingka, may apoy sa itaas at sa ibaba. Nabibibingka si* Ms Macapagal in her desire to look conciliatory to her deposed predecessor and help bind the nation's wounds.

The safest stance, however, would have been for her to just have kept quiet and let the graft court decide this issue of where to detain Estrada; for after all, it is the court that has the final say.

* * *

In our two-hour media dialogue with Ramos over PTV-4 last Friday, we participants zeroed in, among other issues, on what's uppermost in the minds of many people nowadays: the need to alleviate the plight of the poorest among us. The May 1 riots appear to have been a wake-up call, not just for Ms Macapagal, but for other citizens too. Even though those who assaulted Malacañang were obviously manipulated by opposition politicians for their own power-grab design, still, the fact that the rioters, who were drawn from the poorest sectors of society, were so susceptible to manipulation spoke a lot about their plight—and society's neglect.

In response to media's query about government's response to poverty alleviation, Ramos pointed out that during his administration, the 1997 Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Law created the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC) and its operating arm, the People's Credit and Financing Corp. (PCFC). The PCFC, a government-controlled corporation that descended from Imelda Marcos' old TLRC, recognized that one key element to poverty alleviation and capabilities building is providing credit to the poor. This comes in the form of small capital to start some business, that frees the citizen from the grip of the usual 5-6 usurious lending scheme.

* * *

Ramos pointed out that the NAPC and PCFC were originally chaired by a former Marcos technocrat named Orlando Sacay and he was succeeded by Donna Gasconia in the Erap administration. Today the NAPC is headed by Teresita Quintos-Deles, who used to be the executive director of the original Social Reform Council, an NGO with links to the Department of Agrarian Reform then under Secretary Ernie Garilao. Ramos noted that the PCFC has improved upon the famed Grameen credit system which was pioneered by a Bangladesh professor. Grameen's structure is anchored on cell units, each of which is composed of five housewives who are each lent a small loan to start a business. Under the Philippine version, 20 housewives obtain credit under an honor system, to produce quality goods for local or even export distribution; a default by one unit member causes the suspension of the loan renewal for all; hence there's tremendous peer pressure to pay back.

* * *

Ramos pointed out that the PCFC is always on the lookout for NGO partners, and one NGO that picked up the poverty bull by the horns is a Chicago-based lending organization called Opportunity International. This NGO is organized into seven regional areas, and with the passage of the 1997 law on poverty alleviation here, noted Ramos, the Philippines became No. 1 among 26 lending destinations of Opportunity International, cornering $15 million in credit assistance to Smokey Mountain and communities *along da riles*, out of a world capital of about $50 million. Opportunity International is headed by a West Point '78 trained-Vietnam veteran named Charles Dokmo, and Ramos' daughter, Angela Ramos-Jones, is a director in the RP chapter.

* * *

Ramos also cited the Magna Carta for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), RA 6977, approved on Jan. 24, 1991 during the Aquino administration and authored by his sister, Sen. Leticia Shahani, but implemented when Ramos assumed power in 1992. Under this law, nicknamed by Ramos the "small buga," commercial banks and government financial institutions are tasked to set aside 10 percent of their funds for microlending. As in many other things, however, the concept of this Magna Carta for SMEs appears to be great but the implementation has suffered

Recently Trade Secretary Mar Roxas pointed out that at least P100 billion in funds raised to finance SME projects remains untapped. Which is lamentable when one considers that many SMEs have difficulty obtaining loans from private financial institutions (SEs are those with capitalization below P150,000 to P1.5 million and MEs are those with P1.5 million to P60 million). Roxas said he plans to tap the expertise of cooperatives and some NGOs to push full utilization of the SME funds in "creative" ways, even as he promised diligent policing of funds. Let's get that P1-billion SME fund to those who need it most, Mar.

* * *

As Ramos pointed out, indeed, access to credit is a keystone to poverty alleviation. We civilian professionals who founded the Alay sa Kawal (ASK) Foundation saw this 15 years ago when we realized the plight of the widows and orphans of ordinary soldiers killed or permanently incapacitated due to battle injuries. The average profile of the soldiers' widows is a high school graduate between 25 and 35 years of age, with about three to four children of school-age, living in the province. The widows' problem is how to feed and educate their children as high-school-trained solo parents only, on their meager pensions (roughly about P3,000 to P3,500 a month). The P10,000 ASK gives each widow, which the board plans to increase with the money raised from recent fund drives, is used by many beneficiaries to start a small business, e.g., a small dress shop, beauty parlor or *carinderia*. It's credit that's important.

* * *

By the way, Ramos tracked me down last Tuesday, after the first part of this write-up on our PTV-4 dialogue came out, about an error. He stressed that in addition to the seven coup attempts against the Aquino administration in Manila, there were two others outside, namely, the joint military and political move by Col. Alexander Noble and Mindanao leader Reuben Canoy, and the move by former RAM leader and subsequently Gov. Rodolfo Aguinaldo in Cagayan in the north. I had mistakenly listed the Noble and Canoy efforts as separate.

Then too, Ramos, noting that Asiaweek's Tony Lopez and I didn't subscribe to his theory that the Aquino administration had a rougher time in stabilizing the government than the Macapagal administration, stressed his thesis anew. He said that those coup attempts "were bloody, you know," whereas, he said, the military remains united behind Ms Macapagal. The problems we're having now are nothing compared to those years, he said, but the difference is that "nowadays there are just too many crybabies."

China sees insult in Chen, Dalai Lama US visit

NEWS ANALYSIS

Phil Chetwynd

BEIJING—The warm welcome being given to the Dalai Lama and Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian in the United States will be seen as a calculated insult by China which detests both men, analysts said.

The communist leadership in Beijing reviles Chen and the Tibetan spiritual leader as separatists intent on gaining independence for Taiwan and Tibet, and forcing the breakup of China.

By hosting both men at the same time—Chen is on a stopover in New York while the Dalai is to meet President George W. Bush Wednesday—Washington has clearly spelled out its new priorities to Beijing.

The two visits were approved despite vociferous Chinese protests. They also come against a background of deteriorating Sino-US relations and the Bush administration's suspicious and hawkish view of China.

"China will see them (the visits) as a very deliberate insult and a confrontational approach by George Bush," said Prof. Lau Sui-kai, a political analyst at the Chinese University in Hong Kong.

Chen is not scheduled to meet any US officials during his 40-hour visit before he heads to Central America but he will meet influential US lawmakers.

The relatively high-profile stay is in stark contrast to Chen's visit in August last year when the previous US administration all but confined him to his hotel so as not to upset Beijing.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory and it sees any recognition of the island's leaders on the international stage as encouragement for Taiwanese independence, which it has promised to oppose with military force.

Jean-Pierre Cabestan, of the French Centre for Research on Contemporary China in Hong Kong, said the two visits showed Bush was not prepared to be intimidated by China's noisy and often vitriolic rhetoric.

"Frankly the attitude of the Clinton administration, which prevented Chen from meeting with press or lawmakers, was ridiculous. Why bow to the Chinese when you are the most powerful nation in the world?" said Cabestan.

Since Bush took office promising to treat China as a rival rather than a partner, relations have plummeted and tension reached breaking point last month after a collision between a US spy plane and Chinese jet fighter.

Bush's decision to sell Taiwan sophisticated new weapons, US criticism of China's human rights record and the arrest of half a dozen Chinese-American scholars in China have further inflamed the situation.

China also views Bush's plans to build a National Missile Defense (NMD) as an attempt to neutralize its military power and shield Taiwan from possible attack.

Lau Siu-kai said despite the tension China had still been unsure how to evaluate Bush, until now.

"I think Beijing must come to the conclusion that as long as Bush remains US president there will be a new Taiwan policy and maybe even a new Tibet policy," he said.

US officials downplayed the Dalai Lama's planned meetings with Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell, pointing out that former president Bill Clinton also met the Nobel laureate and that the meetings were not political.

But Jigmey Tsultrin, spokesperson for the Tibetan government in exile in India, said Bush's meeting with the Dalai Lama was significant as it would take place on the 50th anniversary what China considers its "liberation" of Tibet.

"It looks like Bush will treat the Tibetan issue as a priority and put more pressure to Beijing to improve the situation for Tibetans," he said.

Earlier this month Bush appointed Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky as a special coordinator for Tibet, a move condemned by Beijing as interference in its internal affairs.

China has ruled Tibet with an iron fist since it invaded in 1949. The Dalai Lama fled Tibet after an abortive anti-China uprising in 1959, and has since mounted an international campaign for greater autonomy.

AFP

The 'other' poor

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

MY pager just flashed a news brief: "THE GOVT WILL ANNOUNCE TODAY ITS POLICY OF 'REFOCUSING' ON PROJECTS TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF M.MLA'S URBAN POOR."

I don't know yet what this "refocusing" means. I have yet to hear from the very low-key (or media-shy?) Anti-Poverty Commission. But if I go by what I see in the government TV channel, I think we will be hearing more about presidential visits to depressed areas in Metro Manila and anti-poverty projects being launched in these places.

These are where many of the pro-Estrada supporters and fans came from. These are where many of the armed attackers of Malacañang spend most of their time, sharpening their *balisong* and *pana* while dulling their minds with intoxicants and synthetic powder.

I have nothing against them and their poverty. I don't blame them entirely for the social ills and the kind of politicians they have invited into their lives. My heart goes out to them, especially to those who have been blinded by promises and whose fierce loyalty to their movie idol has become even pathetically fiercer when this idol became president-turned-alleged-plunderer.

But my heart breaks for the other kind—the poor who refuse to be blinded and used as human fodder and attack mob. These are the poor who keep their dignity intact. These are the kind I would like to see helped to their feet immediately.

Okay, after all that breast-beating and gnashing of teeth over sins of omission against the poor, after the word poor has been uttered millions of times these past weeks, it's time to exorcise that word. "In the name of the poor" now sounds blasphemous to me.

I would not like to see government officials, church leaders, civil society groups and good individuals suddenly doing cartwheels just to appease the poor who have been fueled to hatefulness and destructiveness. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's gestures and pronouncements on healing and bridging the great divide between the rich and the poor are commendable.

But I hope the focus is not mainly on the angry "Estrada poor" who went berserk on May 1. Sure, they deserve attention but they're not the only poor around.

Those rioters weren't angry because they were poor. They did not throw rocks and turned into a lynch mob because they were poor. Poverty was not the immediate reason. It was their devotion to their fallen idol who excessively loved other things that had nothing to do with loving the poor—mansions, mistresses, booze, gambling. It was seeing Estrada being arrested, getting photographed like a common criminal, etc. Many are saying now that that should not have been shown on TV.

But now the word is out—a pro-Estrada Camp Crame insider allegedly took the footage that showed Estrada being fingerprinted and posing for mug shots. The footage was meant to arouse the Estrada faithful.

Ah, but I had always wanted to see the guy being handcuffed. I have repeatedly said in Filipino, *gusto ko siyang ipakitang pinoposasan.* Why should a bag snatcher from the slums be handcuffed while a very rich former president who rode on the shoulders of the poor and then allegedly stole a billion bags not be handcuffed?

But Filipinos are *pusong mamon* for movie heroes. For you softies: Estrada's moral crime was not just that he allegedly stole or plundered massively, it was that he allegedly committed these crimes even while he had the name of the poor on his lips, using their name in vain, making them believe he was for them. He was not. And the tragedy is that the poor who would die for him do not know this.

So enough with these appeasement moves. This government should also seek the dignified poor who do not desire to be appeased or stroked, who have waited long for their share of this nation's bounty, who do not feed on politics, who toil hard because they want to offer a life of dignity to their children, who are on the verge of being emancipated if only there were better laws and swift presidential fiats.

To give priority to poor urban areas perceived to be Estrada bailiwicks would be giving poverty alleviation a bad name and would smack of politics. As a poor public school teacher once said, "We're also poor. We have no home of our own, we rent a miserable little place. Technically we're not squatters so they don't think of us. But those who squat on public or private property are the ones being rewarded with titles of ownership. Maybe we should also break the law?"

I didn't realize that farmers had watched the pre-election INQUIRER-GMA 7 "Grand Senatorial Debate" on TV that ended way past midnight. It was toward the end that I got to bring up the coco levy issue (to Sen. Sergio Osmeña who's sure of being reelected). For remembering the coconut farmers on national television I received two kilos of mangoes the other day and a thank you note that ended with a plea: "*Nawawala na ang pagasa ng mga magniniyog*. Please help."

These are the "other" poor who have not strayed into the arms of scheming politicians oozing with so-called charisma or magic.

At Tuesday's press conference, President Macapagal was asked if she felt her magic has worked for the victory of the senatorial candidates in the People Power Coalition. "I'm not a magician," was her crisp and witty reply. Movie tough talk defines Estrada; hard, honest work is what Ate Glo is about. Gee, I am proud of her, this President from my generation.

I hope that in her desire to reach out to the "Estrada poor" Ate Glo does not forget the "other" poor, those who have waited patiently, intelligently trusting in their worth and ability to make meaningful changes in their own lives. These are the poor, the truly poor who deserve to inherit the earth—immediately.

Why Sachi should go to UP

DEAR Kuya Henry,

Allow me to write this letter to you—a first in many years—as you exert influence on one of the most important decisions in the life of our beloved Sachi.

I have known that after a careful assessment, you have decided to send Sachi to Saint Louis University in Baguio for college. While I receive this news with utmost respect, let me air my dissent and give you my thoughts on it.

YOUNGBLOOD

Herdy L. Yumul

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

I believe that SLU is a good school but I wish Sachi could go to the University of the Philippines because there, Sachi will grow among the best and the brightest, the future movers and shakers of our country. In UP, sure to open before Sachi's eyes are doors of opportunities that graduates of lesser schools can only dream of. But above all, in UP, Sachi would continue to be the best, the brightest and the most promising person that she is by nature.

If Sachi were just a mediocre student, I wouldn't care. But we know that she is far from ordinary. She has the skills and the attitude typical of those who make it "big time."

Some of our relatives commented that it wouldn't matter much where Sachi would go to college. She could go abroad and earn precious dollars, anyway. But if that is the case, we should as well let her go to a school in Timbuktu and the old American patient in San Diego she would nurse in the future would never mind.

Not infrequently, going abroad is a desperate move. It is an open acceptance of one's failure to succeed in one's own country. Overseas Filipino workers are not heroes all the time. Sometimes they are victims of poverty, if not of greed.

It is in this light that we admire Mommy and Daddy because they were able to raise us with success. They may have not set foot in college but their hard work, discipline and business acumen paved the way for them. They made a mark without a college diploma and without having to leave us to earn money elsewhere.

But Sachi wants to be a physician. Because entrusted in a doctor's hands are lives of human beings, academic training is of primary consideration. Dr. Benjie Flor (Daddy's cardiologist) knows that very well and so he went to UP for college. He also had the chance to go abroad, not to battle against time for green money, but to further his expertise. Now, Dr. Flor serves his Mother Ilocos by being a good and trusted professional. And his job pays him well.

I am both amused and saddened by the irony of it all: many parents break their bones just to send their children to Manila for better education. Not few of them do not mind if their kids go to the so-called "diploma mills" where degrees are gained without much pain. There are so many schools of that kind, many of them are in Recto. But to many parents, it really does not matter, *basta mapag-aral lang sa* Manila, okay *na.*

Here we have Sachi, admitted to the premier institution of learning in this country. And we do not send her to UP? Many Upcat passers tender parties to celebrate their victory, their having won the key to their dreams. And on the bleak side, I have also heard of some young people claim their lives upon receiving the kind of "thank you but you did not make it" letter sent by the university. And we dismiss Sachi's chance to go to UP with such ease?

I hope to make you realize that this humble request is born neither of caprice nor of boastfulness. This is born out of ambition and concern for our beloved Sachi.

I remember very well when I was about to go to college. Almost everybody did not want me to go to Manila. But Mommy was there and I will forever be thankful to her. Together, "*Inkgidem mi iti panagbasak* (we just closed our eyes and went on against all odds)." In the same manner, let us transcend the present and on to the future.

Opportunities like these knock but once.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago once said that non-UP graduates belong to "lower life forms," like insects. While we are much aware that the lady senator is really out of her wits most of the time, it is, to some extent, reflective of how society looks at graduates of UP and other top schools. It might be unfair, yes. But it is impossible to change the world in a few years when Sachi graduates from college.

Several times, I have heard personnel managers say that they do not even bother to glance at the resumés of graduates who are not graduates of top schools. Their papers are a regular visitor of the wastebasket. This practice may sound unfair but not totally irrational. Ateneans, La Sallians, Bedans, UP graduates and alumni of other equally reputable schools often need less training and are generally more competitive. Companies invest in them. And so, a UP Diliman diploma is a VIP passport that is recognized by every Filipino in any point and corner of the world.

One does not have to be an academician to realize that when you are a graduate of a top school, you do not have much proving to do. And true enough, we do not always have the opportunity to present our collegiate achievements to other people. Sachi will not always be able to tell her patients that she enjoyed a scholarship in SLU or that she was awarded 12 medals when she graduated there. But If people know that you are a graduate of UP (no matter if you finished last and spent seven years to complete your four-year course), the assumption is that you are excellent, a cut above the rest.

You bear the indelible mark of greatness.

It is thus no wonder why the other honor graduates of Sachi's class, from rank No. 2 to rank No. 7 are raring to go to UP. And after 25 years, when they meet again in their class reunion, how will our dear Sachi, their valedictorian, fare?

Looking at your concerns, I know how concerned you are for Sachi's safety and that financial concerns are carefully considered.

On the question of safety, we do not deny the risks. But if only to ease your worries, let me tell you, thousands and thousands of little *probinsiyanas*, like our dear Sachi (like Miriam then), flock to UP every year. With faith in God and in themselves, they emerge victorious! Many of them are my friends. We know very well that one does not have to go to Manila to encounter danger. Dangers and risks are eminent in Baguio too, even in Laoag.

As to monetary considerations, a UP education is a most profitable investment. Did you know that government subsidizes almost P50,000 for the education of every UP student every semester? Sending Sachi to Manila would mean a pocket less full, or even empty. But the money is never put to waste. Every centavo is an investment to Sachi's character. From my humble means, I also offer to help Sachi in her finances if she goes to Manila for college.

A few weeks ago our family rejoiced because of Sachi's feat. She graduated valedictorian in the only science high school in Ilocos Norte. I hope we do not reward her by depriving her of the education she deserves.

To those who were given more, more will be expected. I pray that we present the treasure of a UP education so she could well serve God and country in the measure becoming of her.

I hope I did not sound antagonizing as I presented my views. My chest suddenly became heavy when Sachi told me that a decision has been made. I hope the decision is not irrevocable so that the feelings of grief and great loss—for the Sachi that should be—will leave me soon.

I never wanted to interfere with your affairs and so I always called Sachi to ask her to talk it over with you. But because she is a really good and understanding daughter, she could not demand too much. She pretends not to have any regrets but her voice says something and I am bothered. Before it's late, please accept my last-ditch appeal.

Herdy L. Yumul, 22, is a Philosophy and Human Resource Development graduate of the San Beda College.

Holes

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A FRIEND of mine was in a dark mood a couple of days ago. The Comelec count was well in progress and four Puwersa ng Masa candidates, discounting Noli de Castro, who ran more as an independent than as PnM, were ensconced in the lower rungs. They were Edgardo Angara, Loi Estrada, Ping Lacson and Gregorio Honasan. Clearly, she said, we still lacked political maturity as a nation. Clearly, she said, we still had a long way to go before we could really show we deserved democracy.

Others expressed it more despairingly in the e-mail. The elections, one said, showed that we had just taken a great leap backward. What we gained at Edsa II has been more than reversed by "Edsa III" and the results of the elections. Another said the elections proved how we liked to dig a hole for ourselves, and this one was as big as they came. He didn't know if we could ever climb out of it.

I can understand where they're coming from and commiserate with them. The thought of a detergent making it to the Senate—though in Lacson's case, it is a detergent that turns white into red, rather than the other way around, as witness the T-shirts of the Kuratong Baleleng suspects—is something that can ruin your day.

But in the scheme of things, I don't know that the vote for non-People Power Coalition members, however seemingly a sign of national perversity, really shows political immaturity. In the end, I don't know that the vote for the PnM, however seemingly indicative of collective masochism, naturally defeats democracy.

At the very least, the voters have been mature enough to refuse to put back Juan Ponce Enrile and Miriam Defensor-Santiago in the Senate. Another friend was just telling me the other day that he finally found reason to hope. At least Enrile and Santiago won't be there to not make him want to wake up every morning over the next three years. As he said this, Enrile and Santiago had slipped past the powers of *dagdag-bawas* to rescue. If for that alone, my friend said, he considered the elections successful. Especially so as the Ilonggos, Santiago's favorite people, had ditched her while going all out for Franklin Drilon. If for that alone, he said, he was going out to celebrate. I agreed with him, and helped him celebrate.

But more than this, I don't know that, despite their aura of doom and gloom, the events of the past month haven't brought out something positive. I don't know that, despite its grotesqueness and perversity, the vote of the poor for the PnM candidates doesn't represent something positive. That positive thing being that for the first time in a long time—or probably for the first time ever in this country—the poor have finally brought their cries to the ears of the nation.

If "Edsa III" did not happen, would Jaime Cardinal Sin have discovered how deeply negligent the Church has been to the poor? Would he have apologized to the poor for saying that their presence at the Edsa Shrine, even if merely to show support for a thief, desecrated the holiness of the place? If the poor hadn't voted for the opposition candidates, or rejected the administration candidates—I've always said the poor's vote for the PnM was far less a vote for them than a vote against government: a protest vote precisely—would Ms Macapagal have thought to reach out to them? If the poor had voted 13-0, as Ms Macapagal begged them do, would she have resolved to visit Payatas and the other slums in this country in an effort to gain the trust of the people who live there, such as being there can be called living?

If "Edsa III" did not happen would we now be wringing our hands and bowing our heads in bewilderment, asking what we can do to bridge the gap between the poor and ourselves? If the poor did not come out en masse to register their anger at the polls—an 85 percent turnout must tell us the poor did so with alacrity—would we have realized how blithely we ourselves have taken the poor, thinking of them as a genie we may summon from the lamp whenever we find ourselves in a predicament (which is how we really think of "people power") and never as flesh and blood individuals that have been crying to be seen and heard by us for God knows when?

It's not just the poor of this country that learn their lessons the hard way, we do. It's not just the poor of this country that remember only when a painful lesson has been taught them. The rich, the middle class and all the institutions of society—the government, the Church, the schools, the media—do. Without the hard and acutely painful lesson we have just been taught by "Edsa III" and the elections, would we have learned anything?

The answer to that is by no means hypothetical. We did vote for the administration candidates in 1987, during the first elections after martial law, and produced a result that was the next best thing to 13-0, which was 11-1. The only administration candidate who lost was Bobbit Sanchez, who today believes he was junked by his own party after drawing flak as a presumed leftist. All that did was give Cory Aquino to believe she had the mandate to turn Edsa I into a victory for her kind. Edsa I was won by the people—it was truly "people power" in that it drew its strength from the masses as much as from the elite—but it did not end up being won for the people. It ended up being won for Cory, Sin, Fidel Ramos and their friends.

Edsa II had begun to turn in that direction too before "Edsa III" and the current elections. Won by the people, it did not redound to the benefit of the people. It redounded to the benefit of Cory, Sin, Ramos and Ms Macapagal, who were pretty nearly the same beneficiaries of the first Edsa. The poor weren't just proclaiming their undying loyalty to Erap at "Edsa III" and the elections, which was arguably aberrant, they were exploding with wrath at the way their victory had been hijacked by the rich once again, which was perfectly reasonable. Think about it: If "Edsa III" hadn't happened and the current elections had turned out to be 13-0, wouldn't Edsa II have gone the route of Edsa I, steered smugly in that direction by leaders who believed they had the blessings of a people with an infinite capacity for pain?

Political maturity is a tricky thing. It's not just the poor that need to show political maturity, we do too. I should think the true test of political maturity is our willingness to understand why the poor voted the way they did. I should think the true test of political maturity is our ability to respond to the challenge that vote poses for us.

We've dug a hole in this country, true. But quite frankly, I don't know who's in or out of it.

* * *

Comments are welcome at dequiros@ vasia. com

Do the poor deserve all that blame?

LETTERS

I AM aghast at the contempt expressed by your columnist, former Supreme Court Justice Isagani Cruz, over the electoral choices of the Filipino masses. Assessing the votes of millions of Filipinos, he chortled: "The voice of the people, the voice of God? Some of the victors were the devil's choice!"

Cruz mentioned that leaders like Lenin, Sukarno, Marcos, Fujimori and Estrada won heavy support from the masses but ultimately proved unworthy of shepherding a nation, bringing their people misfortune.

Please, I beg the good justice to understand that all these popular leaders-turned-monsters were charismatic men who rode to power by tapping into the massive discontent of their poor countrymen. The pent-up desire of great numbers of poor people to be free from destitution, to want more opportunities in life other than the scraps from the table of the privileged, are God-given motivations. Tragically, it can also be used and twisted by evil men to their advantage.

Are the ignorant masses at fault if an Estrada or a Noli de Castro comes to power? Or should it be the entrenched institutions and powerful families who, in the first place, give them so little choice in life?

If there's anything that reeks of pure evil here, it's the infamous selfishness and greed of the Filipino elite who have perfected the art of not giving back to society. They invest in foreign real estate, in foreign education for their children, in pleasure cruises and in pocketing crooked politicians. Yet they are resolutely blind to the needs of the Filipino masses. When the notion strikes them, they salve their conscience by giving niggardly alms or doles, staging five-star hotel charity events and paying starvation wages.

If the Russian nobility had not cordoned themselves off in their estates and given more attention to the yawning social gap rather than vanities and luxuries, do you think Lenin would have been victorious? Would there have been a Sukarno had the Dutch colonial powers been more benevolent in terms of education and governance? Would the Peruvians even consider a Fujimori if that country had built up a viable middle class? Would Filipinos vote for an Estrada if they were a learned and prosperous people?

Before accusing the poor of being the devil's instruments, Cruz must first look at the self-absorbed members of his class and observe why—in a country so very rich and gifted—so little wealth is shared, so little knowledge is spread and so much sadness continues to be carelessly inflicted by a small band of ruthless, selfish people.

If some opposition candidates considered by Cruz as "demented and unprincipled" are headed for the Senate, then don't blame the poor, who don't know any better, thanks to an unreformed educational system and a series of wheeler-dealer governments.

No, the Filipino *masa* are not masochists or madmen, as Cruz brands them, they are simply neglected and unenlightened by their more privileged countrymen, who would like them to remain forever that way. Now that's really diabolical.—**FRED MACUSI, Matiwasay Street, UP Village, Quezon City**

Flying diskettes

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I HAVE to chuckle whenever I hear Namfrel Chair Jose Concepcion hollering about the need to computerize our elections. Why, he asks, can't we do it like in the United States, where voters shade in their choices on a ballot which is inserted into a machine that automatically registers the votes and sends it to central processing units for tallying?

I have no doubts we do need to computerize certain procedures, but I think it's dangerous to think we can solve all our election problems, particularly fraud, through computers alone.

Our election procedures are outmoded, and I don't just mean technologically. We make life hard for ourselves with all kinds of unnecessary forms and procedures. This last election I went up to my "precinct" (a table) where six people were seated, all cramped together. Two people were handling the voters' list and all they do is tell you what your voter number is. There were another two people handling a notebook where the voter numbers and names were listed. After signing for the ballot, you filled it out in your "booth," actually a chair with a "Voter's Secrecy Folder." After voting, I had to fingerprint myself on the ballot's bottom stub, and then tear off that stub. With a smudged thumb, I had to sign in the voter's notebook and then get that indelible delible ink dabbed on my index finger.

Offhand, you can see how many of those procedures are both messy and useless. All the different lists that sometimes contradict each other. And the fingerprinting—I don't know why we cling on to this primitive ritual dating back to an era when illiteracy rates were still high.

The procedures that come after the voting are even more tediously useless. Just to cite one example, canvasser forms have to be filled up seven times. (I don't know what term you use for filling up forms seven times—the worst I know of is quintuplicate, involving five copies.) Government offices are notorious for this waste of paper, and we all know when the time comes where you have to look up a document, no one can find it even if there are so many copies on file.

Anyway, back to the canvassing form. Namfrel was supposed to get the sixth copy for its quick count but it turned out most of the forms they got were illegible so they asked for the seventh copy. Don't ask me why the seventh copy is clearer than the sixth.

All these procedures are supposed to safeguard the ballot but, like so much of government, bureaucratic procedures actually add to the opportunities for bribery and corruption.

So, you may argue, let's computerize these procedures so we won't have all these problems. I'm not sure. Computerization can actually amplify those problems, especially election fraud. We've already seen some shifts in the *dagdag-bawas* tactics during the last election. Instead of bribing individual voters, politicians have been taken to targeting canvassers instead, who can alter a few thousand votes at a time. With computerization, you could have wholesale tampering that may be more difficult to detect. With our existing manual canvassing, you can detect erasures on the form itself. Not so when the *dagdag-bawas* is done online. (Unless, as the Erap joke goes, the computer operator alters the numbers encoding by applying correction fluid on the computer monitor.)

There are other possible major disasters. Namfrel should know—several times their computers stopped functioning because it didn't have enough computer memory. And let's not forget the hackers. Early this week the police arrested members of the "69 Family," four teenagers (the leader was 19, the youngest aged 14) who had hacked their way into a telecommunications company and made some $600,000 worth of overseas calls. There were suspicions, never proven, that they had attacked the Namfrel site. I have no doubts that given its incompetence, a Comelec site used for canvassing will be successfully attacked by hackers, some hired by politicians and others just kids out for fun.

I'm not saying we shouldn't computerize. By all means, let's move on with computerizing the voters' lists, and some of the procedures. But let's be realistic as well, and take all the necessary precautions. Review the entire voting procedure and figure out what we can streamline without sacrificing security. Install safeguards, checks and balances, every step of the way.

I'm not just talking about safeguards against corruption. We have to make sure the software programmers know what they're doing, and based on my experiences of government computers and websites, I'm not too optimistic. As the expression goes among computer programmers, garbage in, garbage out. If you get bad software, we might end up with a nightmare with the data getting all messed up, or entire systems shutting down.

Let's be realistic about what computers can and can't do. In the last election, the Comelec's greatest "crime" this last election was depriving young Filipinos of their right to vote, simply because of their poor information campaign for the registration of new voters. Even the most sophisticated computers can't substitute for common sense and hard work.

And let's not get visions, either, of automated voting like in the United States. There are still many places in the Philippines that don't even have electricity so don't count on bringing in gadgets and gizmos. Even if we could automate, the procedure for shading the ballots isn't as simple as it sounds. The last presidential election in the States was so contested because a number of voters got confused by the ballots, claiming they shaded in the wrong boxes.

Let's call a spade a spade. So many of our problems this last election are rooted in corruption and incompetence. Given such systemic problems, if and when we do computerize, be prepared for a new crop of problems: invalid ballots that will probably drive the computers berserk, flying diskettes, self-destructing hard disks, maybe even voting viruses.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.org

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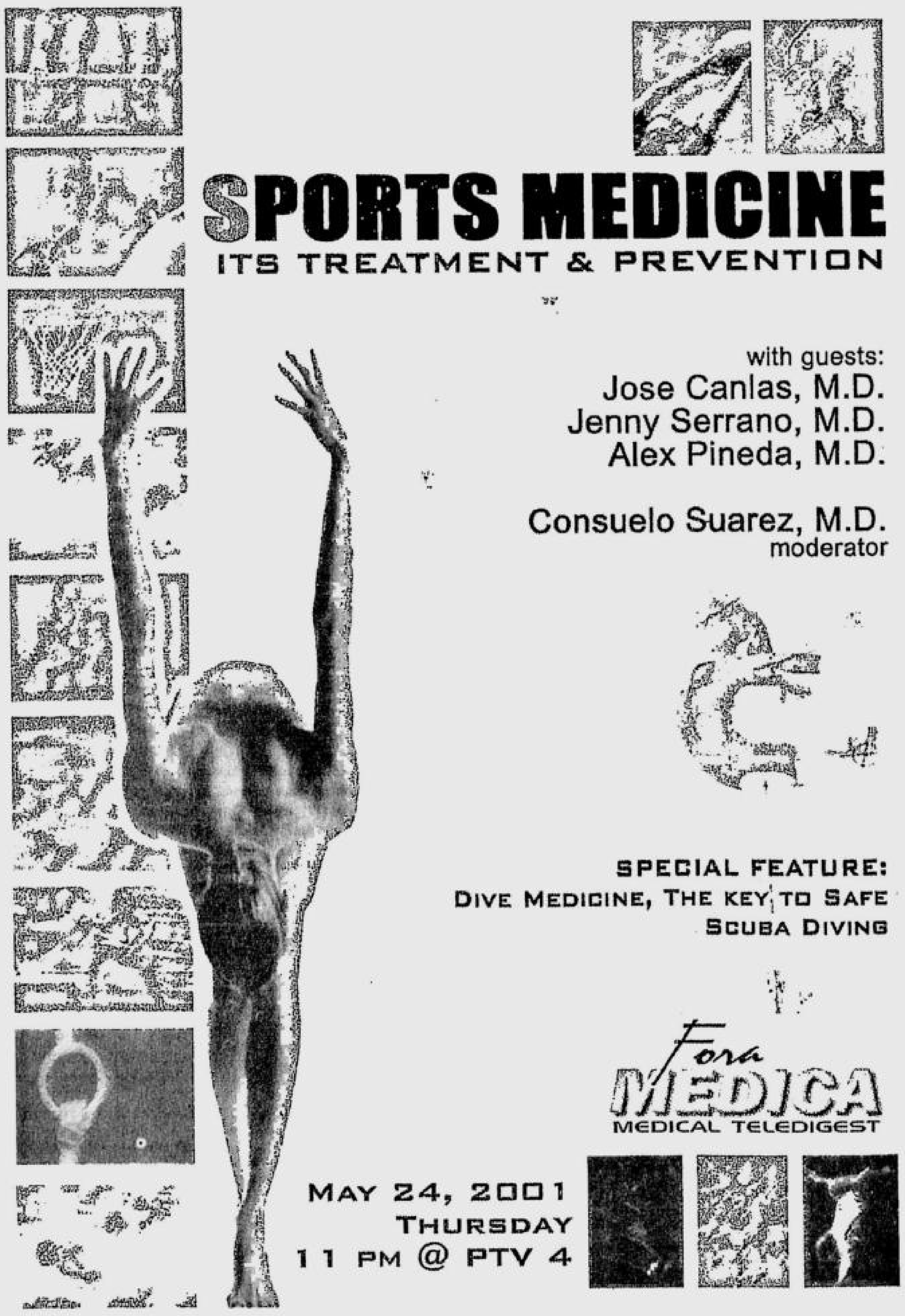

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ITS TREATMENT & PREVENTION

with guests:
Jose Canlas, M.D.
Jenny Serrano, M.D.
Alex Pineda, M.D.

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The WORLD

Wahid denies rumors he wants to fire generals

JAKARTA—Beleaguered President Abdurrahman Wahid yesterday denied persistent rumors that he planned to fire several top generals as a prelude to dissolving parliament before it can order his impeachment.

"There is nothing. The news has been twisted," Wahid told reporters at Jakarta's state palace.

Jakarta has been gripped by speculation that Wahid is in conflict with Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri and the Armed Forces top brass over threats he has allegedly made to shut down parliament, which will meet next week to decide whether to impeach him over corruption allegations.

Wahid repeatedly has denied he has any plans to act against the legislature.

Nevertheless, media reports suggest he wants to replace one of his sharpest critics, Army Chief of staff Gen. Endriartono Sutarto, with reformist Lt. Gen. Johny Lumintang, who is currently the defense ministry's secretary general.

Sutarto—and some other senior officers—have repeatedly warned Wahid that they would not support him in his confrontation with parliament.

Tensions rose during the weekend when Sutarto told troops they should be loyal to the nation and not to any single individual—an apparent reference to Wahid who is constitutionally the commander in chief.

Earlier on Wednesday, Sutarto and other generals, including the Armed Forces commander Adm. Widodo Adisutjipto and the security minister, Lt. Gen. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, had a one-hour breakfast meeting with Wahid and Megawati at her house.

There was no comment after the meeting.

Parliament is scheduled to decide on May 30 whether to launch formal impeachment proceedings against Wahid, who has been implicated in two multimillion-dollar corruption scandals.

Lawmakers have already censured him twice for the scandals, despite his repeated denials of any wrongdoing. *AP*

5 more killed in Aceh

JAKARTA—An Indonesian soldier and two rebels were killed in the latest gunbattles between security forces and separatist guerrillas in Indonesia's northwestern Aceh province, police said yesterday.

Lt. Col. Wanto Sumardi, North Aceh police chief, said a soldier was shot to death by rebels in a clash on the outskirts of Pidie town early Tuesday. He said government troops killed two rebels in Jambo Aye village in northern Aceh.

A rebel spokesperson, Sofyan Daud, confirmed the clashes but said both victims were villagers. He also claimed that five soldiers were killed.

Sumardi also said that on Tuesday, a teenager died in a handgrenade explosion and that an unidentified body was found nearby.

Fighting between government troops and rebels demanding independence for Aceh province, about 1,750 km northwest of Jakarta, has claimed more than 6,000 lives in the past decade. Clashes intensified recently and government forces have threatened to launch an offensive against the guerrillas. *AP*

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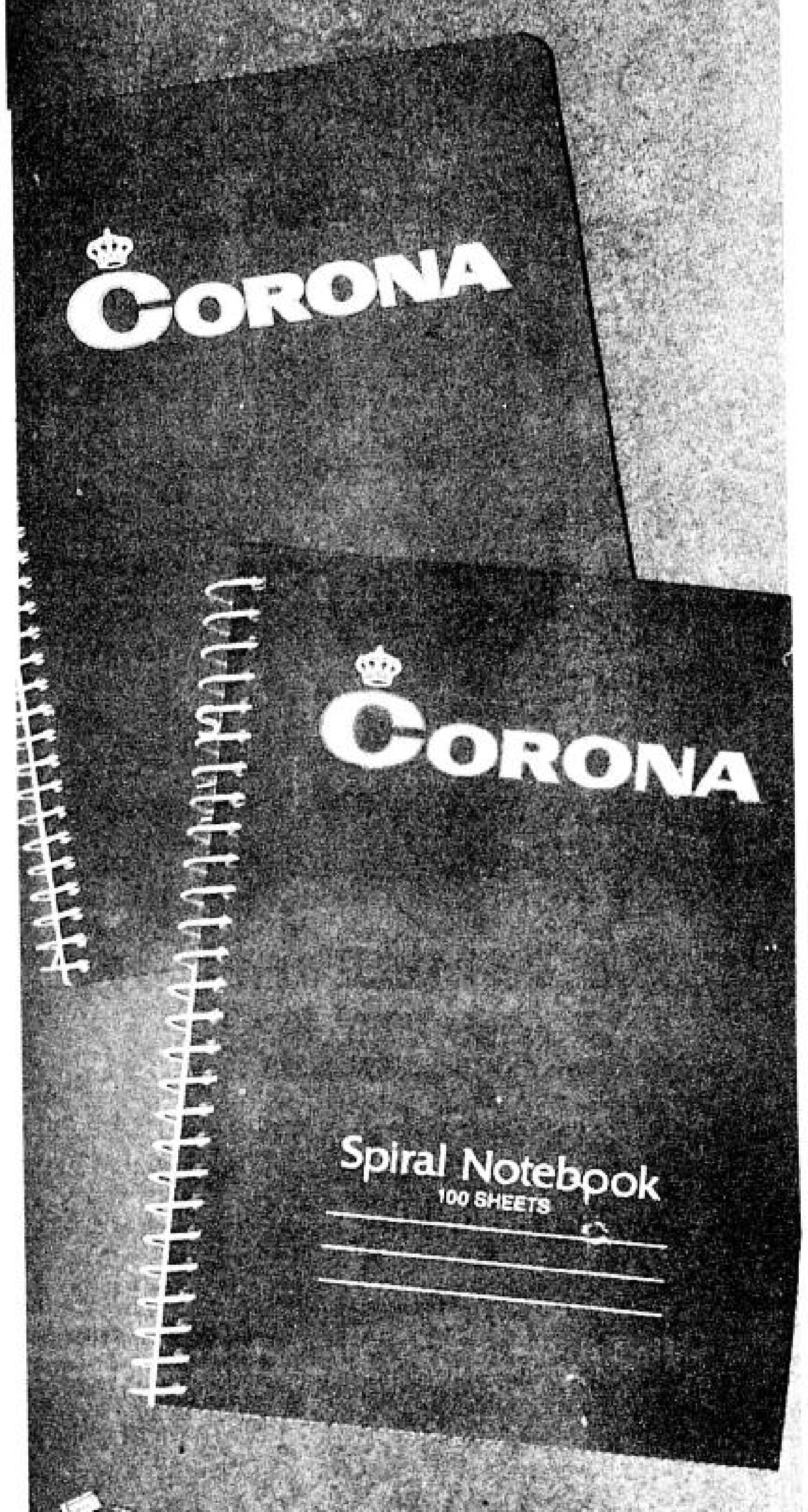

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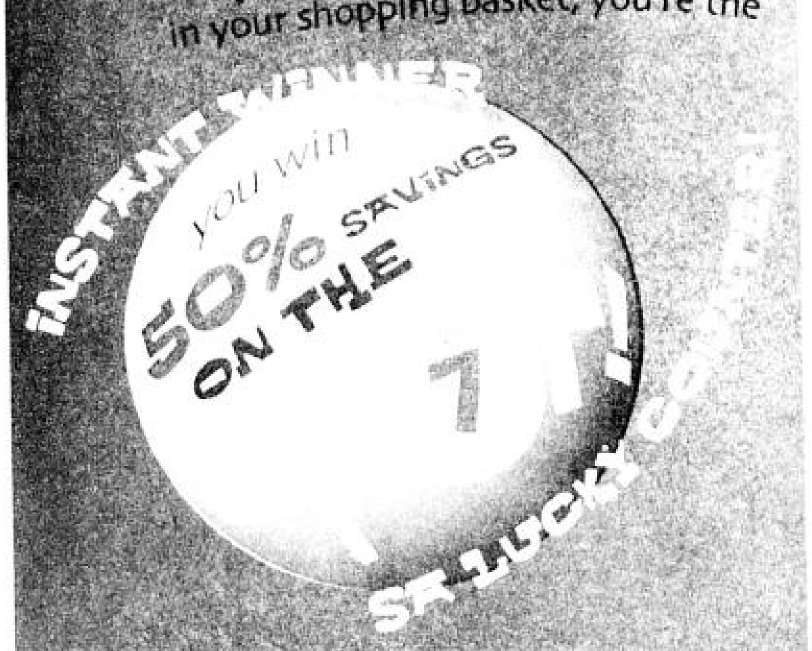

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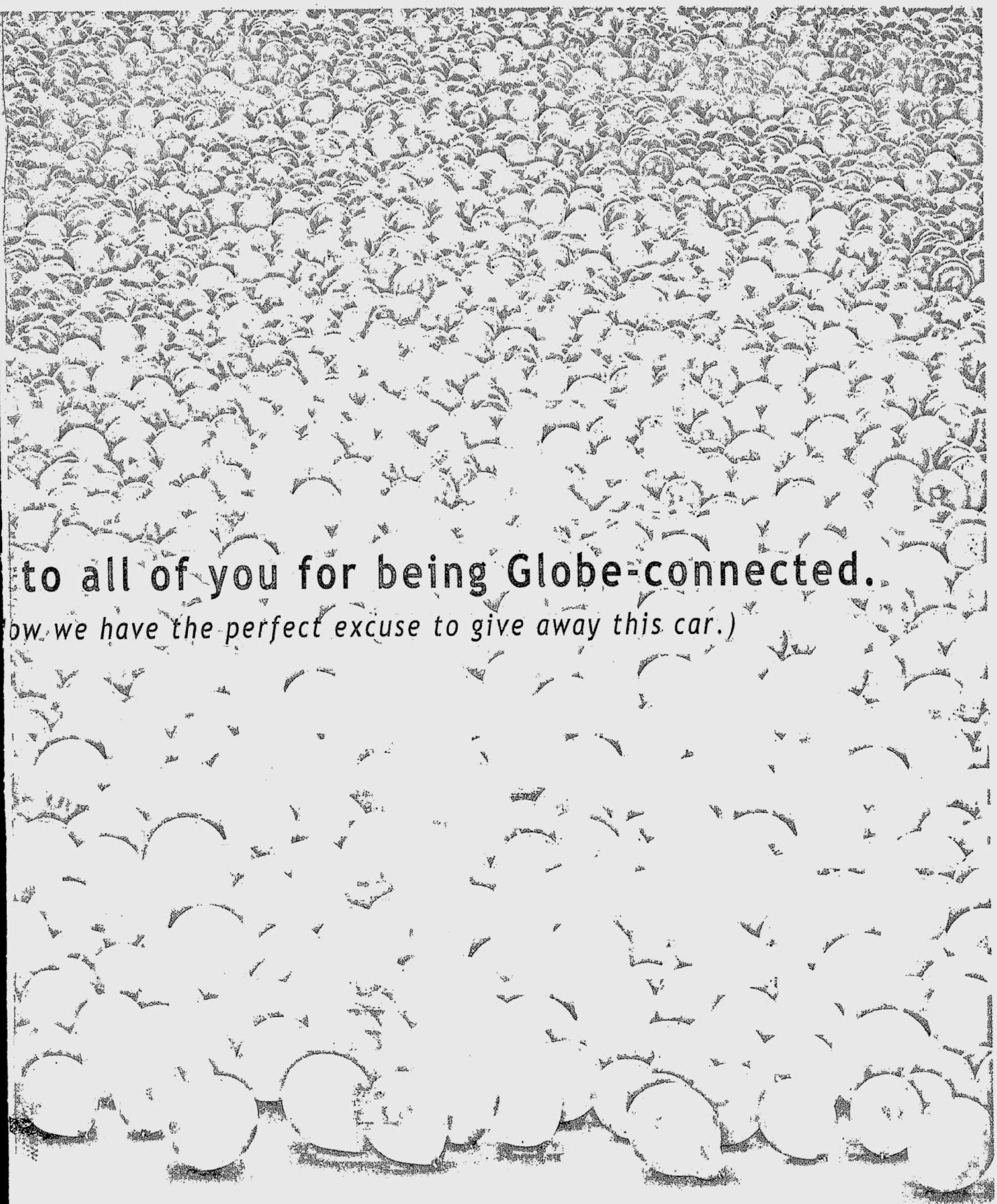

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Israelis call for ceasefire Palestinians turn it down

JERUSALEM—Israelis and Palestinians were waiting to see if eight months of violence would wind down after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called for a ceasefire but rejected a key recommendation from an international commission.

At a televised news conference Tuesday, Sharon appealed to the Palestinians. "I call tonight for a total truce in the area, and I say again here that if the Palestinians accept this proposal to stop the fire, we will immediately stop the fire," he said.

However, a senior Palestinian official said Sharon's call was just part of the Israeli plan to continue occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Ahmed Abdel Rahman, an aide to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, said, "We reject everything Sharon said about a ceasefire."

In Washington, White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer welcomed Sharon's call. He said it was "vital" that "the parties in the region unequivocally speak out and call for a cessation of the violence." Fleischer said US President George Bush would "welcome a similar statement" from Arafat.

Following Sharon's appeal, Israeli Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer ordered the Israeli Army to stop all firing except "when life is in danger."

In a statement, Ben-Eliezer called on the Palestinians to "immediately stop violence and terrorism as a first step toward a return to the negotiating table" in keeping with the report of the commission, headed by ex-US Sen. George Mitchell. The report was published in New York on Monday.

However, Sharon rejected a key recommendation of the commission—a total freeze on construction in Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He said his government had agreed not to build new settlements, but allowed construction to meet the needs of the Israelis already living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Critics of Sharon's settlement policy said there were already thousands of empty apartments in the settlements. By rejecting the construction freeze, Sharon was playing games with the commission report, said dovish parliamentary opposition leader Yossi Sarid.

"This is just a pose of accepting the Mitchell report while removing all its content," he told Israel television.

After meeting Arafat, UN Middle East envoy Terje Larsen said an Israeli settlement freeze would be "one of the most important confidence-building measures," and it would help Arafat "cool down the situation."

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo said the findings of the commission must be implemented as a package deal. He called for an international summit meeting to set up a "mechanism to implement the recommendations."

In his statement late Tuesday, referring to Sharon's news conference remarks, Abed Rabbo did not mention Sharon's call for a ceasefire. *AP*

ABOUT 20 followers of the spiritual sect Falun Gong stage a petition during their meditation exercises outside Hong Kong's Legislative Chamber on May 23. The followers and opposition lawmakers accused yesterday the government of bowing to pressure from Beijing at the expense of Hong Kong's freedoms as government officials have acknowledge recently they are studying anti-cult measures in other countries. AP

Falun Gong worries HK will soon outlaw it

HONG KONG—Amid growing worries Hong Kong could outlaw Falun Gong, followers of the meditation sect and opposition lawmakers yesterday accused the government of bowing to pressure from Beijing at the expense of Hong Kong's freedoms.

Falun Gong was outraged when Hong Kong's political leader, Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, referred several times to an incident in Beijing in which five people set themselves afire and said he didn't want anything like that happening here.

Tung has vowed that he won't let anybody "abuse Hong Kong'. freedoms and tolerance," and while Hong Kong has not specified any action against Falun Gong, recent statements from government officials have been taken by the group and pro-democracy politicians here as evidence an anti-cult law is in the works

The Chinese leadership in Beijing says the burning incident in January proves that Falun Gong is an "evil cult" that threatens Chinese society, but Falun Gong says the people who set themselves ablaze in Beijing's Tiananmen Square could not have been true followers of Falun Gong, which preaches nonviolence Two of the people died.

Hong Kong government officials have acknowledged recently they are studying anti-cult measures in other countries—and the convenor of Hong Kong's Executive Council, Leung Chun-ying, sought early this week to quell fears that any action against Falun Gong could escalate into an assault on mainstream religions in Hong Kong.

Falun Gong "is not part of any religion and therefore there is no association between what may or may not happen with Falun Gong in Hong Kong or any other parts of the world and with religious freedom," Leung said. "Freedom of religion and religious association are fully protected by law in Hong Kong." *AP*

'ONLY THE BEGINNING'

Toxic chemicals treaty adopted

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Environmental advocates stressed that a global treaty banning 12 highly toxic chemicals is only the beginning, as they looked to governments to take the next steps: ratify, implement and expand.

"Today we should endorse the convention as it is but soon enough we have to start discussing and preparing for adding new chemicals," Sweden's Environment Minister Kjell Larsson said at a news conference before the treaty was formally adopted Tuesday afternoon.

The pact on persistent organic pollutants, or POPs—concluded in December in South Africa—was adopted by consensus after nearly two years of sometimes tense negotiations. A signing ceremony was scheduled for Wednesday morning.

The treaty is aimed at eventually eliminating all hazardous chemicals but lists 12 widely known as "the dirty dozen" for priority action, including PCBs and dioxins, DDT and other pesticides shown to contribute to birth defects, cancer and other problems in humans and animals.

The treaty has been endorsed by US President George W. Bush, giving him an environmental reprieve with European leaders and environmentalists worldwide who have criticized his rejection of the 1997 Kyoto global warming treaty.

But while praising the US administration for its strong endorsement of the chemicals treaty, Larsson reiterated his disappointment over the beleaguered accord to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"I would of course have wanted the same kind of commitment to a very important environmental global protocol—the Kyoto protocol," he said at a news conference.

US Environmental Protection Agency chief Christie Whitman, in Stockholm to sign the treaty, said proposals for alternative measures to address climate change would be forthcoming "soon.

Environmental activists gave a thumbs-up to the chemical treaty's adoption but urged quick ratification and implementation by governments and the eventual addition of more chemicals to the list. *AP*

'Monkey man' panic ebbs in New Delhi

NEW DELHI—The mass hysteria over reports of a hairy, metal-clawed "monkey man" that attacks people sleeping on roofs in the sweltering heat has disappeared as mysteriously as it came.

Police blamed the panic for three deaths this month—one victim leaped screaming from a roof; the others were trampled in a stampede by terrified people fleeing their houses.

Last week, New Delhi police received more than 100 reports nightly about a swiftly moving 1.2-meter creature who could jump six meters. More than 125 people showed police scratch marks, blaming them on the monkey man.

By the weekend, the calls dropped sharply, and on Tuesday there was only one call.

"The panic is almost over now," Suresh Roy, New Delhi's joint commissioner of police, said.

At the fear's height, young men marched through their neighborhoods, beating up people suspected of being the elusive creature.

Asked whether he thought the creature existed at all, or was the result of pranksters, Roy said: "The final word has not been said yet." Some witnesses said the "monkey man" wore helmet or a mask, and some said it could disappear when it pressed its chest.

Roads in several parts of New Delhi and its adjoining towns, Noida and Ghazinbad, were deserted during the panic.

Police announced a reward of the equivalent of #108 for anyone who could capture the creature on film, and sent 1,000 additional men to patrol the streets.

Newspapers ran front-page stories for days and published computer-generated images of the creature from eyewitness accounts.

In parks, coffee shops, offices and parties, the monkey man and its antics became the focus of concern, gossip and jokes. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

US visit angers China

BEIJING—China warned Tuesday that the visit by Taiwan's president to New York will make already tense relations worse and urged Washington to patch up frayed ties. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhu Bangzao also voiced anger over US President George W. Bush's decision to meet with the Dalai Lama, the leader of the Tibetan government in exile. The Dalai Lama's visit to the White House yesterday, combined with the decision to allow Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian's three-day stopover, reflected a toughening stance in Washington toward China, Zhu said. He said it was up to the United States to decide whether to continue with this new tone, or put relations back on an even keel. *AP*

Politics entertaining

TOKYO—The long-haired prime minister thunders about reform. His elderly finance chief confesses memory loss. The fiery foreign minister's trademark phrase is "Give me a break!" In the month since Junichiro Koizumi took control of the ruling party and became prime minister, the Japanese are learning something new about politics: It can be entertaining. Koizumi's offbeat Cabinet and the controversial positions it has taken on everything from public works to defense have turned normally staid Parliamentary hearings into the surprise TV hit of the season. Where bureaucrats once droned on about numbers, Koizumi's team seems to relish debate. Shouting matches break out then dissolve into laughter, and off-the-cuff comments make headlines. "The atmosphere is totally different than before," said Mitsuo Tanaka, a construction worker from Okinawa. "We have a TV in the office and we turn it on more than we used to." *AP*

Yellow cloth for Hindus

KABUL, Afghanistan—Hindus in Afghanistan will be required to wear a yellow piece of cloth on their shirt pocket to distinguish them from Muslims and shield them from religious police enforcing Islamic law, a spokesperson for the ruling Taliban militia said yesterday. The plan to distinguish Hindus was first approved by Afghanistan's senior council of Islamic scholars, or ulema. Then the ministry for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice specified that the label should be a yellow cloth, Abdul Annan Himat, head of the Taliban's Bakhtar new agency, said. Such religious labeling was reminiscent of the Nazi policy in the 1930's and 40's requiring European Jews to wear yellow Stars of David. It drew sharp criticism from both the United States and India, both of which called it a human rights violation. Balbir Singh, a Hindu shopkeeper in the Afghan capital of Kabul, yesterday said that the mark could cause "security problems" for him when he travels to the countryside where people might not like Hindus. "We don't feel safe with this," he said. *AP*

Powell meets Dalai Lama

WASHINGTON—Ignoring complaints from China, the Dalai Lama and Secretary of State Colin Powell met Tuesday to discuss promoting human and religious values, and conditions in Tibet. The Dalai Lama, leader of the Tibetan government in exile, plans to meet with President Bush on Wednesday. In apparent recognition of Chinese sensibilities on the issue, both the White House and the State Department stressed the Dalai Lama's role as a religious rather than a political leader. Meeting with reporters after his 45-minute stay at the State Department, the Buddhist leader said Powell showed "genuine human, warm feelings" during their brief encounter, much as did Powell's predecessor, Madeleine Albright. He said Powell "listened very keenly" to the points he raised. *AP*

Competing proposals

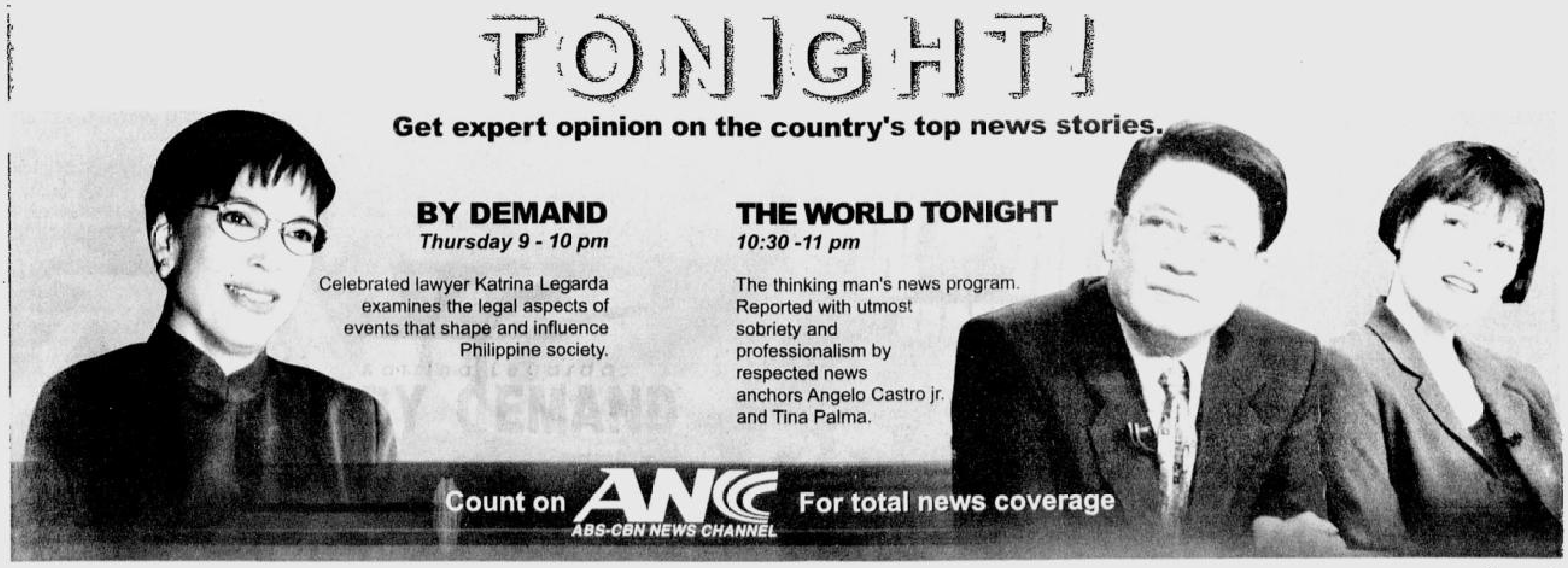
UNITED NATIONS—Russia and Britain threw competing proposals on Iraq before the Security Council on Tuesday, splitting the five permanent members on whether to quickly adopt a major overhaul of sanctions against the oil-rich nation. The British proposal, backed by the United States, calls for lifting sanctions on all civilian goods entering Iraq while toughening enforcement of a decade-old arms embargo. It would prohibit Iraq from acquiring specific military-related items, step up border controls to curb smuggling of Iraqi oil, and prevent any new Iraqi weapons buildup. The proposal by Russia, one of Iraq's key council allies, would extend the existing oil-for-food humanitarian program, which needs to be renewed by June 4. It also proposes several additional elements designed to please Baghdad and appeals to Iraq's other council supporters, China and France. The oil-for-food program is an exemption to the current sanctions that allows Iraq to sell oil provided proceeds go into a UN-controlled account and are used primarily to buy humanitarian supplies, compensate war victims and purchase oil spare parts. It is the main source of humanitarian relief for Iraqi civilians. *AP*

Ethnic press blossoms

NEW YORK--The Bangladeshi community alone has eight newspapers. Polish New Yorkers have six to call their own. And nine publications in four languages are aimed at Indian immigrants. Nearly 200 ethnic newspapers and magazines are printed in New York City today, as many as three times the number 10 years ago. The growth reflects the intricate diversity reflected in US census figures released this week—and mirrors a publishing trend seen across the nation. "We're just starting to look at the growth of ethnic media. But everyone I've talked to agrees that ethnic news media across the US is growing by leaps and bounds," said Jon Funabiki, deputy director for media, arts and culture for the Ford Foundation "There's just incredible vitality going on there." *AP*

Disney spectacle

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii—Disney's movie premiere-extravaganza for "Pearl Harbor" went into the early morning hours Tuesday, a mix of on-screen explosions, spectacular fireworks and the 60-year-old memories of survivors. The sounds and images stirred painful memories for some veterans of the Japanese attack on Dec. 7, 1941, which left about 2,400 Americans dead. But many of the survivors said they enjoyed the film and didn't mind the celebration so close to the gleaming white memorial over the sunken USS Arizona. "I think the sailors would like that," said George Brown, 80, who was on the USS Oklahoma during the attack. "I think this is great. It might bring a lot of people to realize that freedom isn't free. You have to work for it." Disney says it paid $5 million for the premiere; the three-hour, $140 million movie opens across the country Friday and in Japan in July. The Navy assisted in the making of the movie, and Disney is reimbursing it for costs. *AP*



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TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

Wreckage of 6 Japanese ships found

BY ELIZABETH MARCELO
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MASINLOC, Zambales—When the United States finally honored Gen. Douglas MacArthur's promise to return to the Philippines, liberation from the Japanese did not come instantly. Fierce battles were fought on land, air and sea.

Old folks here used to tell the story of the day American bombers blasted away at a fleet of Japanese supply ships, the deep sea from Masinloc to Palauig towns turning into a hell-hole before swallowing the burning vessels.

More than 50 years later, residents of Masinloc have begun retelling that story, following the discovery of the wreckage of all six ships, including remnants of their cargo of combat, office and medical supplies.

These were found by 60-year-old German wreck diver Klaus Sowade some three weeks before his group, Stingray Divers Philippines, was tapped by the Coast Guard to help in retrieving artifacts from what is believed to be a 15th or 16th-century Chinese shipwreck in the neighboring town of Sta. Cruz.

Unlike the Sta. Cruz wreckage, which yielded ceramics and pottery said to be of Ming Dynasty vintage, the Masinloc sunken war relics won't earn the finder a fortune.

Nonetheless, both finds bolster Sowade's belief that the seabed of Zambales is like a "theater of Philippine history"—from the pre-Hispanic times to World War II.

"I will continue to locate more wreck sites," Sowade said, pointing out that there may be more in the uncharted seabed of northern Zambales.

"I believe this was (part of) a trading route to Manila," he said, stressing that "it's quite possible a lot of traders trying to seek shelter in typhoons (foundered) or hit reefs and sank."

This, he said, must have been the fate of the Sta. Cruz wreckage uncovered by a fisherman in 1987 some 110 feet below sea level, between the Hermana Mayor and Hermana Menor islands six nautical miles from the coastline.

There's evidence that Chinese trade with the Philippines started in 500 BC and continued to flourish in the 16th century.

Sowade said discovering more underwater wreckage could unlock a wealth of information on the culture, history and economy of societies from the points of origin and destination of the artifacts.

The six World War II shipwrecks at Masinloc tell a compelling story of the horrors of war and the lessons learned.

Mud-covered helmets, gas masks and canteens found in the wreckage bear no sign of the fate suffered by the soldiers who used them or who recorded and safeguarded their inventories.

In a ship's medicine room, Sowade retrieved metal boxes containing syringes for spinal injection and bottles that perhaps had medicine in them. Hundreds of Japanese pencils were scattered in the wreckage.

Sowade's favorite is a metal paperweight that looked like a miniature cap of a Japanese military officer, found in what must have been the room of the ship captain.

He did not retrieve everything he saw, leaving behind enough for divers who would be among the first to see one of Zambales' latest wreck dive spots.

Court grants bail to Balweg murder suspect

BAGUIO CITY—Lorna Rivera-Baba, the jailed Aglipayan church worker accused of masterminding the slaying of former rebel priest Conrado Balweg, could not contain her joy when she learned that she would finally be reunited with her family on Monday.

The regional trial court of Bangued, Abra on Monday allowed Baba, who had been detained at the Abra provincial jail since July last year, to post bail.

Aside from the murder charge, Baba is facing charges of illegal possession of firearms and use of a fictitious name.

The court allowed Baba to post a P50,000 bail for the murder charge and a P30,000 bail for the other charges.

"I was so happy when I was told that the court would grant me a bail. I can really say that I have nothing to do with the murder of Balweg from the very start. I have nothing to do with it and I know that the charges against me are not true," Baba told reporters in a press forum here on Tuesday.

Baba said she would be spending time with her family in San Fernando, Pampanga, after being detained for more than a year.

Jose Molintas, Baba's lawyer, said the court's decision to grant bail for the murder charge was "a clear indication that the prosecution has no evidence" in accusing Baba of masterminding Balweg's slaying.

"Murder is not supposedly bailable, but in Lorna's case, it was proven that there is weak evidence against her so the court finally decided to grant her bail," he said.

Baba was released 5 p.m. on Monday.

She was accompanied by her lawyers, fellow church workers and members of human rights organizations when she appeared before reporters here the day after.

Molintas said he was confident that the court would dismiss the cases against Baba.

"There is no clear evidence that will link her to the killing of Balweg. Lorna is really innocent of the crime," he said.

In March last year, Baba was arrested without a warrant by military intelligence agents in front of the Aglipayan church in Piddigan, Abra.

She was detained for five days in Camp Aguinaldo and was presented to the media as "Ka Lisa" of the New People's Army and the supposed mastermind in the slaying of Balweg.

The Isafp also identified her as "Miel Leuminaria," said to be a top official of the NPA.

Officials of the NPA unit operating in Abra said Baba was not a member of their group.

The NPA's Agustin Begnalen Command, headed by Balweg's brother Jovencio, owned responsibility for the slaying. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Basilan solon accuses gov of vote-buying

ISABELA CITY, Basilan—Rep. Gerry Salapuddin has accused reelectionist Gov. Wahab Akbar of alleged massive vote-buying with the use of fake money.

Salapuddin also claimed that some relatives and armed men identified with the governor coerced people to vote for Akbar or they will not be allowed to cast their votes.

Salapuddin presented to media several fake P500 and P1,000 bills which were allegedly received by more than half of the voters in the towns of Lamitan, Tuburan, Tipo-Tipo, Sumisip, Lantawan and Maluso, and this city.

He said his camp learned that as much as P200,000 were poured in the 200 barangays.

"We are alarmed, if in case this is true. This is tantamount to economic sabotage. The manufacture of fake money is punishable by death," Salapuddin said.

Akbar, a candidate of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, denied using money, fake or not, to buy votes and ensure his victory.

"My performance speaks for my ratings. I don't have money to buy votes. Only my track record can support my candidacy," Akbar told the INQUIRER. *Jonathan Ma and Julie Alipala-Inot, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Marawi canvass moved to camp

MARAWI CITY—The Commission on Elections yesterday ordered the transfer of canvassing of election returns here to the Army's 402nd Brigade Camp near Iligan City.

The order was issued by the Comelec *en banc*.

"Canvassing will proceed without interruption until further instructions are given to me," said Michael Valdez, head of the city board of canvassers.

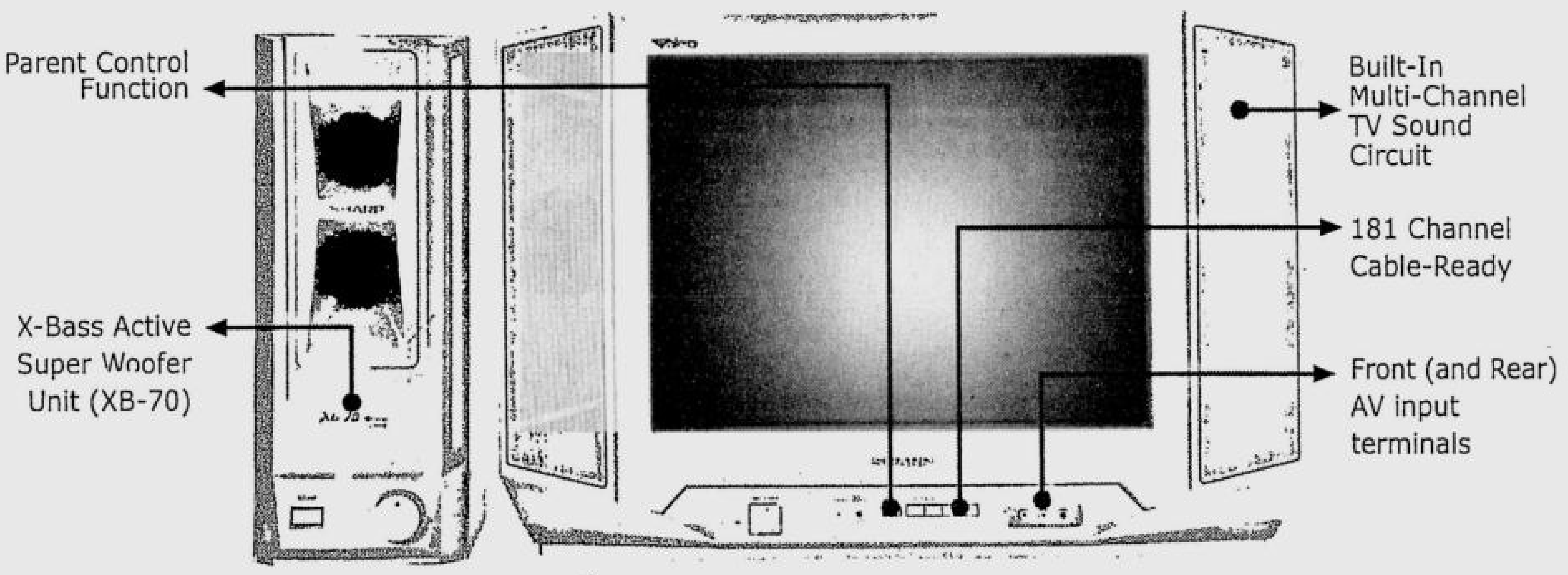
But lawyers of mayoral candidates Jerry Tomawis and Omel Basman and congressional candidate Sultan Ferdausi Abbas said the canvassing should be held in Metro Manila.

Members of the City Board of Canvassers (CBC) have demanded for the transfer following series of grenade explosions at the provincial engineering building, the designated venue of the canvassing.

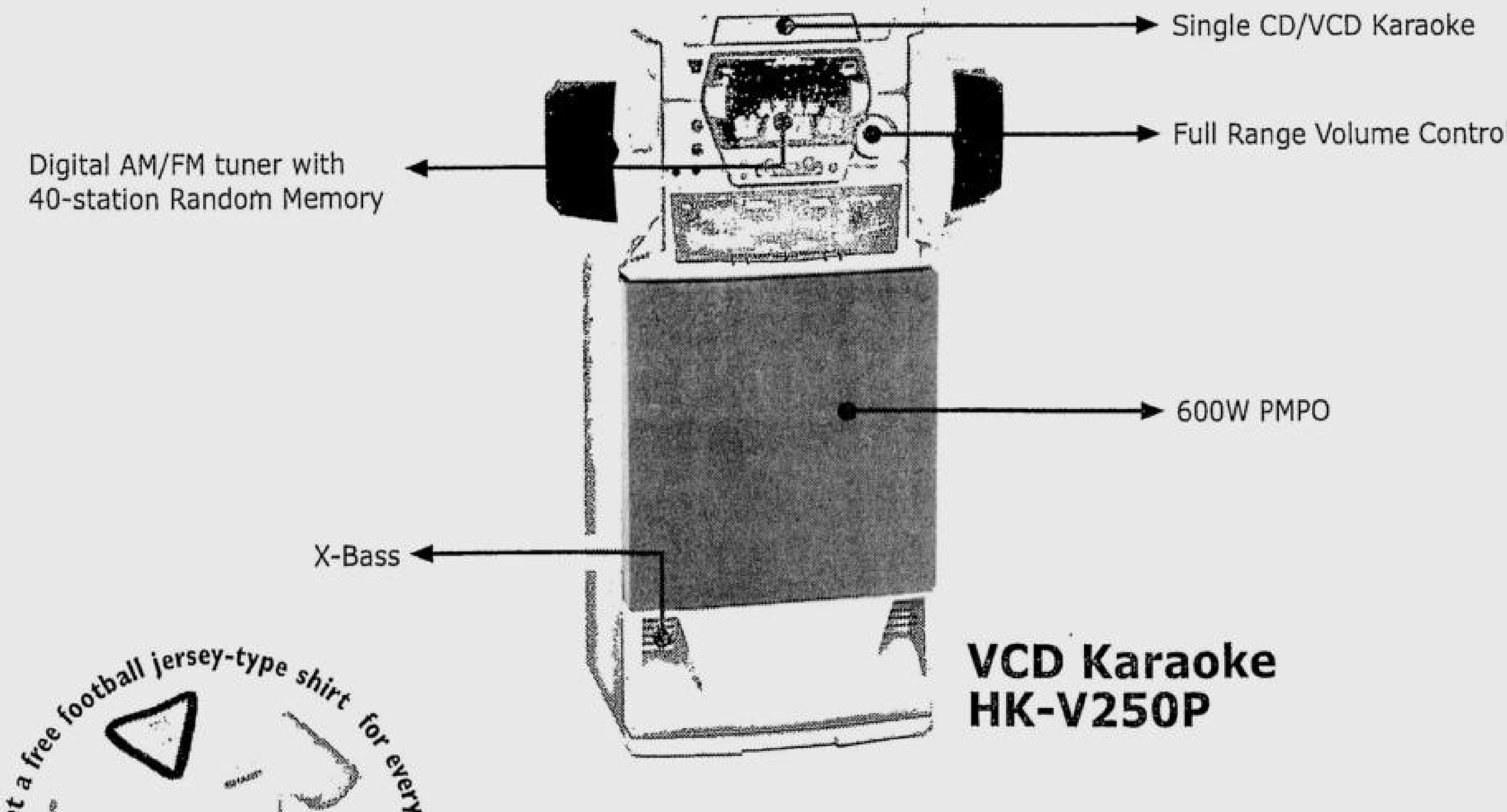
The latest venue in Iligan City is believed to be safer for the board of canvassers.

Violeta Gloria, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Before you decide to get a TV or VCD karaoke, here are some points to consider.


Parent Control Function
X-Bass Active Super Woofer Unit (XB-70)
Built-In Multi-Channel TV Sound Circuit
181 Channel Cable-Ready
Front (and Rear) AV input terminals

SHARP Valeo Colored TV 21V-K300XB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Pearl Farm attacked

(From page A1)

"She was monitoring it as early as midnight and she was very concerned about what happened. She has ordered the authorities, the police and AFP units, to conduct a hot pursuit operation," presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said.

The resort, owned by the family of Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio Floirendo, is 970 kilometers south of Manila and seven nautical miles from Davao City. It is a 40-minute ride by boat from Davao City.

Known for its white sands, Pearl Farm is a popular destination among foreign and local tourists. At the time of the attack, the hotel had 49 Koreans, 23 Taiwanese, four Americans, two Australians and 44 Filipinos as guests.

Armed with 50 cal. and 60 cal. machine guns, M-203 grenade launchers and M-14 and M-16 rifles, the armed men approached the berthing area in two pumpboats and a motorized outrigger boat (*kumpit*) at 11:40 p.m.

They tried to dock at the berthing area and one of the gunmen claimed they were lost, Chief Insp. Eduardo Reyes, Samal police chief, said.

A security guard, Jimmy Kulam, shouted at them not to dock, but he was shot dead. A 10-minute exchange of gunfire ensued.

The intruders blew up the resort's berthing place, where luxury and high-speed boats were docked.

Two Cougar speedboats and four jetskis exploded after being hit by M-203 grenades, police said.

Killed in the crossfire was Rolando Jara, a boat mechanic. His body was badly burned from the explosion.

Wounded were Danny Orbuda, Samuel Morales and Leopoldo Ibañez, all security guards.

Retreat

Reyes said the armed men failed to reach the berthing place because of low tide. They withdrew and headed for Talicud, where their bullet-riddled *kumpit* was found beached in Barangay Dadatan, seven kilometers from the Pearl Farm.

Reyes said the *kumpit*, the FB Sassien, had a 230-horsepower engine. On its side was painted No. ZAM-2-F-00357, indicating that it was registered in Zamboanga City.

Police recovered a 50 cal. machine gun mounted on the boat.

According to Reyes, the villagers saw at least 23 heavily armed men left the boat and demanded another vessel from them.

The gunmen found a pumpboat, the FB Teresita, and took its skipper, Lando Bayato, and engine operator, Winnie Duran, with them.

Samal Mayor Rogelio Antalan told the INQUIRER that the armed men left Talicud around 5 a.m., or some five hours after the raid, as the police had failed to intercept them.

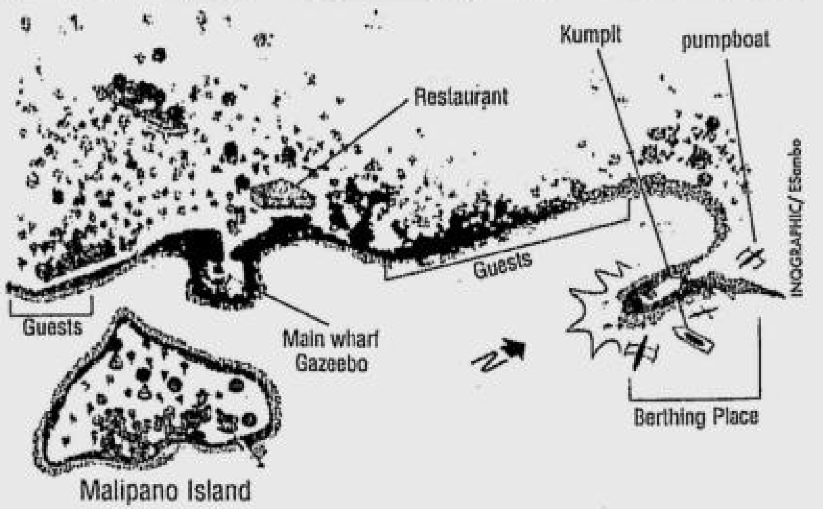
Antalan said the island, which has a 118-km coastline, had only 66 policemen.

Police found the pumpboat abandoned in Barangay Ginalucan in Malita, Davao del Sur. There was no sign of the hostages, they said.

Pursuit mission

The Air Force immediately dispatched two MG-520 attack helicopters and a Huey chopper to scour the coastal areas along the Davao Gulf.

Raid on Pearl Farm



Senior Supt. Eduardo Matillano, regional police chief, alerted all police forces and asked the local chief executives to help them run after the suspects.

He said the police had already identified the attackers, but refused to divulge their identities to the media so as not to jeopardize their operations.

Asked if the Abu Sayyaf was behind the raid, presidential spokesperson Tiglao said there were conflicting reports about who the perpetrators were.

"The police haven't given any report that it was the Abu Sayyaf. In fact, there are reports that it might have been politically motivated," Tiglao said.

Matillano said police investigators were looking into the incident's possible link to an earlier extortion attempt by a group of bandits.

Tourism impact

President Macapagal was "very concerned that these kinds of incidents will be hitting our tourism image precisely because she has identified tourism as one of the main focus for jumpstarting the economy," Tiglao said.

In a statement issued in Manila, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon described the situation as "under control."

"This banditry is an isolated case. It should not cause alarm among tourists and locals," Gordon said.

Sonia Garcia, tourism regional director, appealed to the media not to sensationalize and speculate on the incident pending the results of the investigation.

Garcia said steps had already been taken to ensure the continued confidence of tourists in the resort.

Pearl Farm guests hailed the security force of the resort for handling the incident well.

"The security force did a good job. Security is not a problem but I hope this incident should not happen again," said Winson Go, a Chinese-Filipino from Cebu who brought with him 15 Taiwanese tourists from Taipei.

Best security

A Danish guest checked in yesterday despite the incident. He said the hotel had the best security.

"There are always risks anywhere in the world and an incident like this could happen in other hotels in other countries," the foreigner said. He declined to give his name.

Alex Groizard, Pearl Farm general manager, said 58 guests checked out from the resort but most of them were already scheduled to leave.

"In light of this terrible tragedy, the owners, the management and the staff of Pearl Farm call for sobriety and calm," a statement issued by the hotel said.

Groizard said he regretted what happened, noting that the resort and other hotels in the region were slowly picking up guests since the Macapagal administration took over.

The hotel and resort industry in Mindanao has suffered setbacks, especially after the Sipadan hostage crisis and the "all-out war" policy carried out by the previous Estrada administration against Moro rebels.

"Coming at a time when our country is desperately trying to lure foreign tourists to our beautiful shores, this act must not hamper our efforts to bring the tourism industry back to its feet," the Pearl Farm statement said. ***With reports from Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau, and Juliet Labog-Javellana in Manila.***

House arrest . . .

(From page A1)

the filing of contempt charges against Ms Macapagal for her alleged attempt to influence the Sandiganbayan.

Ms Macapagal earlier announced that she would not block Estrada's bid for house arrest. She also ordered the construction of a new jailhouse for Estrada at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center.

Estrada and his son, San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada, were transferred from Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, to the military hospital in Quezon City on May 12 after they complained of minor ailments.

"The situation calls for the highest judicial statesmanship as we look for the spirit that giveth life, not the letter that killeth," Saguisag told the anti-graft court which is expected to hand down a ruling on the issue of house arrest for Estrada.

He argued that allowing house arrest for Estrada was "part of the inherent powers of a court not prohibited by law."

Estrada and his son are accused of plunder, a non-bailable offense punishable by death.

Still, Saguisag cited the cases of retired Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, disgraced Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic and deposed Indonesian Presidents Sukarno and Suharto who were placed under house arrest by their respective governments.

"There must be some emerging law of nations involved here ... some discernible universal praxis," he said.

"A supposed plunderer surely is not lower than an alleged human rights violator who commits crimes against humanity."

In a talk with the INQUIRER later, Saguisag said he preferred that Estrada be transferred to his mansion on Polk Street, San Juan, so the government need not spend taxpayers' money for the planned jailhouse.

Two Estrada supporters—Makati Rep. Butz Aquino and lawyer Crispin Remulla—echoed Saguisag's line of argument for house arrest.

"It's only fair ... a partial step toward reconciliation," said Aquino who won reelection in the recent polls.

Desierto

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, however, said he would oppose house arrest for Estrada but added he would not object to Ms Macapagal's plan to build a jailhouse for him.

"If the construction of an annex is for the purpose of putting up a jail under the supervision of the Philippine National Police or the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, then that would be legal," Desierto said.

"It must be a jail since it's the basic requirement of the law for those charged with a capital offense like plunder," he added.

The Ombudsman said he would oppose the construction of a hospital annex if it would be turned into a residence or vacation house.

"That would be objectionable really," Desierto said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, however, urged Ms. Macapagal to stop the construction of the new jailhouse, saying people might misconstrue the move as undue interference in judicial matters.

"Why build a jailhouse when there is yet no ruling from the Sandiganbayan? Allow the court to rule and then implement its decision," Biazon said.

He acknowledged, though, Ms Macapagal was "walking on a tightrope."

Lawyer Marichu Lambino of the Public Interest Law Center said Ms Macapagal's decision to drop her objections to house arrest and build a new jailhouse for Estrada smacked of interference in the judicial process.

Lambino said the center would discuss with the Office of the Ombudsman the possibility of filing contempt charges against Ms Macapagal.

"If you try to influence the court, that's a way of impeding the administration of justice. And that's normally contemptible," she said.

Broad spectrum

A broad spectrum of groups that took part in Edsa People Power II yesterday launched the Equal Justice for All Coalitions (E-Just) and vowed to oppose house arrest for Estrada.

"If the Sandiganbayan grants Estrada's petition, we will go to the Supreme Court. If we are still not heard, we will go to the people," lawyer Leonard de Vera, one of the organizers of E-Just, told reporters.

The coalition includes the Caucus of Lawyers for Erap's Abrupt Resignation (CLEAR), Concerned Lawyers for Moral Recovery and Effective Leadership (Clamor), the Organization of United Solicitors for Truth and Estrada's Resignation (Ouster), the All Reform Movement of Lawyer (ARM) and the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC).

Also present in yesterday's news conference were Wilson Loy and Argee Guevarra of Sanlakas, Pastor Boy Saycon of the Council of Philippine Affairs, Trixie Sison of the Couples for Christ, Capt. Baron Cervantes of the Young Officers Union (YOU) and Navy Capt. Proceso "Boy" Maligalig of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan (RAM).

De Vera voiced fears the Macapagal administration was laying the groundwork for a presidential pardon for Estrada.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina rejected suggestions that Ms Macapagal had gone soft and was setting the stage to forgive Estrada with a presidential amnesty.

"If it will produce healing and reconciliation with the supporters of the former President, and the political temperature will go down and we can attend to more basic problems, then let us do all these things," he said of the special treatment.

Lina said the hospital home was "not a mansion or a big house. This is just a small annex."

He added the Philippine National Police was planning to ask the Sandiganbayan to hold the trial in the hospital auditorium.

Sandiganbayan Sheriff Edgardo Urieta said a 300-member police force is to be deployed around the courtroom during the trial. Traffic would also be rerouted away from the building. "We are ready for the arraignment and trial," Urieta told reporters. "The road would be closed just in case there's a rally." ***With reports from Michael Ubac, Blanche Rivera, Andrea Trinidad-Echavez, Alcuin Papa, Juliet Labog-Javellana, AFP and AP***

Erap stores out; GMA in

(From page A1)

launched a program that would make available to them low-priced basic commodities. GMA *sari-sari* stores rolled into place last week, replacing Erap stores in the Cordillera and other poor regions.

Greater Market Access (GMA) stores "quietly replaced" the Enhanced Retail Access Program (Erap) stores of deposed President Joseph Estrada in Benguet, Apayao and a cluster of the 20 poorest provinces, the National Food Authority said.

Erap stores were discontinued in December last year just as Estrada's historic impeachment trial was going on.

According to Genevieve Yu-Cortes, NFA director in Benguet, only people with "food passports," the equivalent of food stamps in the United States, can buy low-priced food items from the stores.

She said that as early as April, her office had been swamped by complaints from former NFA subscribers who were not included in the new "poverty accreditation" list supplied by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Not a PR gimmick

Cortes was quick to defend the GMA stores, saying these were more than just a public relations gimmick.

The stores are a pilot of a system that would be the Philippine equivalent of the state-run welfare programs in the States.

Cortes said the state-subsidized food distribution was initiated by former Agriculture Secretary Edgardo Angara.

The NFA also has a proposal for a "*Bigas Para sa Masa* (Rice for the Masses)" project based on calculations of a rice consumption quota for Filipinos.

"According to our briefing, (each Filipino) consumes up to two kilograms of rice per week ... This will be the basis for fixing a quota in every food passport," Cortes said.

Armed
Philipp

PRESIDENT Macapagal enjoys herself in the company of the Navy's Flag Officer in Command Victorino Hingco and husband, Mike Arroyo, during the Philippine Navy's 103rd anniversary rites. JOAN BONDOC

President Macapagal-Arroyo has been trying to reach out to the poor by launching high-impact projects following the bloody May 1 siege of Malacañang by mostly poor supporters of Estrada. The poor are seen as Estrada's key power base.

Navy support

At the Philippine Navy's 103rd founding anniversary celebration in Sangley Point Naval Base in Cavite yesterday, Ms Macapagal sought the Navy's support in helping her administration's war against poverty.

"It is time to train our guns now on the number one enemy and that is poverty, and you shall be a vital part of the core to win for the nation this war against poverty. You shall do that by carrying on your peacetime duty with the same efficiency you have shown in the battlefields and in the seas," she said.

"It is time to heal the nation's wounds (and) apply the soothing balm of reconciliation and start rebuilding the nation," she added.

The Navy, she noted, has been battling insurgents, intercepting smugglers and doing rescue work in times of calamities and accidents. Through its construction battalions or Seabees, the Navy has also been putting up school buildings and water systems in urban poor areas.

"We are giving peace a chance. With the rebellion aborted, with our election almost completed, or almost completed with only the counting left, we are now faced with the task of uniting our people towards our goal of long-lasting peace, unity and prosperity," Ms Macapagal said.

Unwavering support

The President also praised the Navy for its defense of Malacañang during the May 1 riots, noting that like the rest of the Armed Forces, the Navy put its unwavering support behind "constitutional authority."

"My family and I—and that's why my husband is here with me today—and most of all, all peace-loving Filipinos, thank all of you for this," she said.

During the rites, the President awarded several officers, sailors and civilian employees. Among those who received awards were Lt. Col. Ariel Querubin, who received a medal of valor for the defense of Kauswagan, Lanao del Norte last year, and Lt. Cmdr. Edwin Mackay, who led the Navy contingent in the May 1 defense of Malacañang.

Caltex, Petron hike gas, diesel prices

(From page A1)

the firm would also raise prices effective 6 a.m. today. The official said the increase "would not be more than an average of 45 centavos per liter."

It was the first fuel price increase under the four-month-old Macapagal administration.

The oil price increase is expected to create a domino effect on prices of goods and services and exact a heavier burden on the poor whose support President Macapagal-Arroyo has been seeking since the so-called Edsa III.

But Ms Macapagal said on Tuesday that she would never beg the oil companies not to raise their prices.

"I don't like the culture of the President begging from the multinationals. If there would be talks, it would be on the level of Secretary Camacho," Ms Macapagal said on television.

During the 31-month Estrada administration, fuel prices went up 19 times, prompting then President Joseph Estrada to ask oil companies several times to either delay or moderate the price increases.

Caltex's unleaded and premium gasoline now cost P18.69 and P18.14 per liter, respectively, and its diesel, P14.39 per liter. The increases took effect at 8 a.m. yesterday.

In a statement, Caltex said it was not raising the prices of kerosene, liquefied petroleum gas and other petroleum products.

Petron followed with an announcement that starting 6 p.m. yesterday, its stations would charge P19.14 for a liter of premium gasoline, P18.64 for regular gasoline, P14.25 for diesel and P13.71 for kerosene.

Petron said it was not adjusting prices of LPG and industrial fuel oil.

Caltex said the increase was in response to the rising cost of imported gasoline and diesel and to the depreciation of the peso against the dollar.

The benchmark Mean of Platts Singapore showed that the average price of unleaded gas rose by $7.60 per barrel from $28.28 in March to $34.60 at the end of April.

Diesel prices, on the other hand, rose by $3.25 per barrel from $27.50 to $30.65.

From an average of 48.37 to the dollar in March, the peso weakened to 51.34 at the end of April.

Petron pointed to pressures from increases in the average prices of Dubai crude.

Dubai crude prices rose from an average of $22.82 per barrel at the end of March to $24.84 at the end of April.

As a rule, prices of local petroleum products increase by 33 centavos per liter for every dollar increase in Dubai prices. On the other hand, fuel prices go up by 17 centavos per liter every time the peso weakens by P1 against the US dollar.

As of press time, Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. said it was "still watching the competitive environment and would act according to competitive pressures."

New industry players, who had earlier expressed the need to raise prices, indicated that they were maintaining their price levels.

Flying V said it did not intend to raise prices within the month.

"Since the cost of imported gasoline and diesel and the peso-dollar exchange rate are still tolerable, we can still operate at current price levels," Flying V said.

Reynaldo Marquez, Philippine Institute of Petroleum executive director, said price increases would happen only after the election process was completed.

Marquez noted that there was a growing pressure for the oil companies to raise prices.

Last week, Fernando L. Martinez, New Petroleum Players Association president and Eastern Petroleum Corp. chief, said an increase of between 80 centavos and P1 per liter was imminent.

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Amendments to pleadings—Amendments to pleadings are liberally allowed in furtherance of justice, in order that every case may so far as possible be determined on its real facts, and in order to speed the trial of cases or prevent the circuitry of action and unnecessary expense. The trial court, therefore, should have allowed the amendment proposed by petitioner for in so doing, it would have allowed the actual merits of the case to be speedily determined, without regard to technicalities, and in the most expeditious and inexpensive manner. [References: 1197 Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 10, Sections 1 and 2] [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, First Division, Rudolf Lietz Holdings, Inc. v. Registry of Deeds of Parañaque City, G.R. No. 133240, November 15, 2000]

DIGEST BY R.B. VERA

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, May 24, 2001
6th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 18:1-8
Gospel: Jn 16:16-20

Jesus said to his disciples, "A little while and you will see me no more; and then a little while, and you will see me."

Some of the disciples wondered, "What does he mean by: 'A little while and you will not see me, and then a little while and you will see me'? And why did he say: 'I go to the Father'?" And they said to one another, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand."

Jesus knew that they wanted to question him; so he said to them, "You are puzzled because I told you that in a little while you will see me no more, and then a little while later you will see me.

Truly, I say to you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy."

Commentary:

It took time for the apostolic community to understand many things in the life of Jesus. Only after some time in hindsight they were able to figure out how things fit together in a seeming maze of contradictions. Like the apostles we will not be spared either of similar situations. There are many things in our life, which make sense only after we have undergone them and seen how they have unfolded because of various factors that could not be seen nor accepted at the time they happened. It is so when we refuse to see the impermanence of all that we experience. A little while we experience pain but another while we experience joy. It is not the experience as such that ultimately matters but the mindfulness and meaning with which we go through it.

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	5J - 559	Daily	0500	0610	P2,608	P2,309
	5J - 561	Daily	0700	0810		
	5J - 563	Daily	0900	1010		
	5J - 565	Daily	1100	1210		
	5J - 567	Daily	1300	1410		
	5J - 569	Daily	1500	1610		
	5J - 571	Daily	1700	1810		
DAVAO	5J - 961	Daily	0430	0610	P3,307	P2,919
	5J - 963	Daily	0700	0840		
	5J - 965	Daily	1240	1420		
	5J - 567/597*	Daily	1300	1540		
	5J - 967	Daily	1510	1650		
CAGAYAN de ORO	5J - 381	Daily	0510	0635	P3,295	P2,919
	5J - 383	Daily	0930	1055		
	5J - 385	Daily	1100	1225		
TACLOBAN	5J - 651	Daily	0610	0720	P2,718	P2,419
	5J - 655	Daily	1210	1320		
	5J - 657	Daily	1400	1510		
ILOILO	5J - 451	Daily	0505	0605	P2,498	P2,199
	5J - 455	Daily	0955	1055		
	5J - 457	Daily	1520	1620		
BACOLOD	5J - 473	M/T/Th/Sat	0510	0610	P2,498	P2,199
	5J - 473	W/F/Sun	0620	0720		
	5J - 475	Daily	1000	1100		
	5J - 477	Daily	1330	1430		
	5J - 479	Daily	1630	1730		
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 851	Daily	0600	0730	P3,295	P2,639
	5J - 563/431*	M/W/Th/Sat	0900	1215		
ROXAS	5J - 373	Daily	0530	0630	P2,279	P1,979
DUMAGUETE	5J - 627	Daily	1340	1450	P2,608	P2,309
KALIBO	5J - 339	Daily	0900	0950	P2,608	P2,309
	5J - 353	Daily	1030	1120		
	5J - 341	Daily	1340	1430		

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: CEBU

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 558	Daily	0350	0500	P2,608	P2,049
	5J - 560	Daily	0700	0810	P2,608	P2,309
	5J - 562	Daily	0900	1010		
	5J - 564	Daily	1100	1210		
	5J - 566	Daily	1300	1410		
	5J - 568	Daily	1500	1610		
	5J - 570	Daily	1700	1810		
	5J - 572	Daily	1900	2010		
DAVAO	5J - 593	Daily	0800	0850	P2,339	P2,039
	5J - 597	Daily	1450	1540		
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 431	M/W/Th/Sat	1120	1215	P2,388	P2,089
ILOILO	5J - 164	Daily	1750	1825	P1,799	P1,599
BACOLOD	5J - 126	M/T/Th/Sat	0810	0840	P1,599	P1,399
KALIBO	5J - 232	T/F/Sun	1120	1200	P2,339	P2,039

ORIGIN: DAVAO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 962	Daily	0720	0900	P3,307	P2,919
	5J - 594/564*	Daily	0930	1210		
	5J - 964	Daily	1240	1420		
	5J - 966	Daily	1500	1640		
	5J - 968	Daily	1730	1910		
CEBU	5J - 594	Daily	0930	1020	P2,339	P2,039
	5J - 598	Daily	1620	1710		
ILOILO	5J - 598/164*	Daily	1620	1825	P3,295	P2,839
KALIBO	5J - 594/232*	T/F/Sun	0930	1200	P3,588	P2,859
ZAMBOANGA	5J - 393	M/W/F/Sun	0920	1020	P2,388	P2,089
CAGAYAN DE ORO	5J - 182	T/Th/Sat	0920	0955	P2,298	P1,929

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: CAGAYAN DE ORO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 382	Daily	0715	0840	P3,295	P2,919
	5J - 384	Daily	1135	1300		
	5J - 386	Daily	1305	1430		
DAVAO	5J - 181	T/Th/Sat	1035	1110	P2,298	P1,929

ORIGIN: TACLOBAN

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 652	Daily	0800	0910	P2,718	P2,419
	5J - 656	Daily	1400	1510		
	5J - 658	Daily	1550	1700		

ORIGIN: ILOILO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 456	Daily	1135	1235	P2,498	P2,199
	5J - 458	Daily	1700	1800		
	5J - 462	Daily	1905	2005		
CEBU	5J - 161	Daily	0645	0720	P1,799	P1,599
DAVAO	5J - 161/593*	Daily	0645	0850	P3,295	P2,839

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: BACOLOD

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 474	M/T/Th/Sat	0930	1030	P2,498	P2,199
	5J - 474	W/F/Sun	0810	0910		
	5J - 476	Daily	1150	1250		
	5J - 478	Daily	1520	1620		
	5J - 480	Daily	1820	1920		
CEBU	5J 125	M/T/Th/Sat	0700	0730	P1,599	P1,399

ORIGIN: ZAMBOANGA

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 852	Daily	0810	0940	P3,295	P2,639
	5J - 432/568*	M/W/Th/Sat	1255	1610		
CEBU	5J - 432	M/W/Th/Sat	1255	1350	P2,388	P2,089
DAVAO	5J - 394	M/W/F/Sun	1100	1200	P2,388	P2,089

*via Cebu

ORIGIN: ROXAS

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 374	Daily	0710	0810	P2,279	P1,979

ORIGIN: DUMAGUETE

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 628	Daily	1530	1640	P2,608	P2,309

ORIGIN: KALIBO

DESTINATION	FLT NO.	FREQ.	ETD	ETA	ONE-WAY FARES	
					NORMAL	VALUE
MANILA	5J - 340	Daily	1030	1120	P2,608	P2,309
	5J - 354	Daily	1200	1250		
	5J - 342	Daily	1510	1600		
CEBU	5J - 231	T/F/Sun	1250	1330	P2,339	P2,039
DAVAO	5J - 231/597*	T/F/Sun	1250	1540	P3,588	P2,859

*via Cebu

NOTES:
- All fares do not include government tax and are subject to government approval.
- Child's fare and other regular discounts are applicable against Normal Fares only.
- All fares and skeds are effective May 14.

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Big prizes for Xtreme winners

CEBU CITY—Osaka Iridology CEO Jonathan Guardo promised bigger prizes for the winners of the 3rd Osaka Iridology Xtreme National Mountainbike Challenge this Sunday in Mangyan, Sibonga here. "I'm really very happy with the entry of some professional bikers last year. That's why I wanted to make the prizes bigger this time," said Guardo, who will flag off the event at 7 a.m.

SPORTS

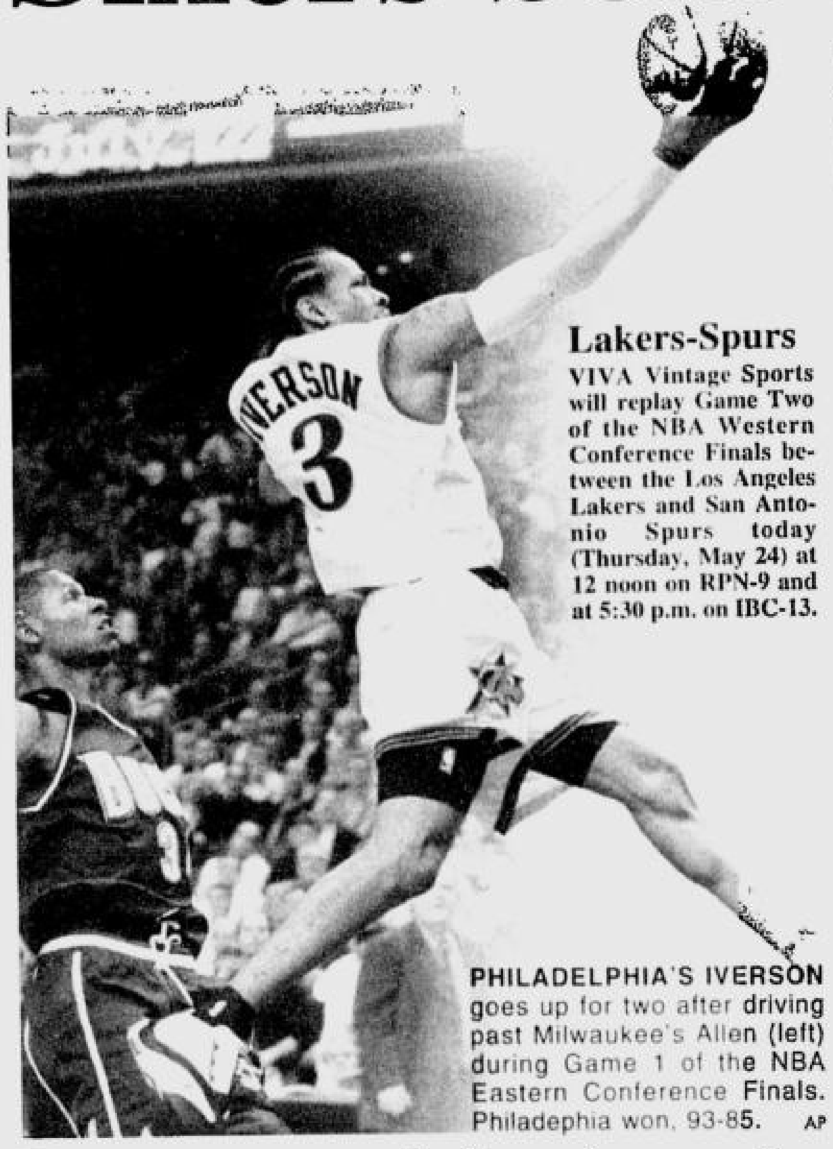
AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ▨ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

Twins outslug Mariners

MINNEAPOLIS—Doug Mientkiewicz went 4-for-5 with four RBIs as the Minnesota Twins outslugged the Seattle Mariners 12-11 Tuesday night in a meeting of the teams with the best records in baseball. Minnesota's Brad Radke—staked to an 8-0 lead after three innings—failed in his bid to become baseball's first eight-game winner. He gave up seven runs—six earned—and nine hits in 4 1-3 innings, finishing two outs short of qualifying for the win. *AP*

EAST FINALS

Sixers beat Bucks in Game 1



Lakers-Spurs

VIVA Vintage Sports will replay Game Two of the NBA Western Conference Finals between the Los Angeles Lakers and San Antonio Spurs today (Thursday, May 24) at 12 noon on RPN-9 and at 5:30 p.m. on IBC-13.

PHILADELPHIA'S IVERSON goes up for two after driving past Milwaukee's Allen (left) during Game 1 of the NBA Eastern Conference Finals. Philadephia won, 93-85. AP

PHILADELPHIA—Allen Iverson stood at the 3-point line, looked Ray Allen squarely in the face and noticed him lean back ever so slightly on his heels.

Using that split-second to make the biggest decision of the game, Iverson promptly hoisted a 3-pointer with 1:10 left that hit nothing but net.

The shot gave Philadelphia a seven-point lead that the Bucks couldn't recover from as the 76ers held off Milwaukee 93-85 Tuesday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference finals.

"I was struggling, and I don't think if I was hitting he would have backed off me like that," said Iverson, who scored 34 points on 13-for-35 shooting. "But he picked his poison and I hit that shot."

The basket gave the Sixers a 90-83 lead after they had let a 16-point advantage dwindle to two, and they went on to retain the homecourt advantage _ unlike what they did in their first two series of this postseason when they lost Game 1s to Indiana and Toronto.

Iverson scored 16 points in the second quarter despite a bruised hip and buttocks that slowed him early and contributed to him missing his first nine shots.

Aaron McKie added 23 points and Dikembe Mutombo had 15 points, 18 rebounds and four blocks, giving the Sixers a "Big Three" of their own that could more than stand up to Milwaukee's Allen, Glenn Robinson and Sam Cassell.

Allen finished with 31 points for the Bucks and Cassell had 20, but Robinson struggled through a 1-for-10 first half and finished with 15.

The Sixers controlled the boards, played more intense defense and held Milwaukee more than 14 points below its playoff average.

The series resumes Thursday night with Game 2.

"We can't play any worse. We didn't do anything we wanted to," Cassell said.

The 76ers scored 38 points in the paint, including 22 in the second quarter when they outscored Milwaukee 32-16 to take control of the game. The Sixers grabbed 17 offensive rebounds and came up with nine steals.

The Bucks had to have an inkling that it wasn't going to be their night when the first quarter ended in a 19-19 tie despite Iverson's 0-for-9 shooting, which included a missed layup and an airball just before the buzzer.

"The worst thing we did was when we stopped (Iverson) from scoring, their other guys made shots. That got their confidence going and they played well as a team," Allen said.

McKie had a steal and dunk for a 34-29 lead, and Iverson ripped some padding out from under the back of his waistband and tossed it aside as the teams came out of a timeout early in the second quarter. *AP*

Tigers boost qualifying chances

EMERSON Oreta unloaded 34 points as the UST Tigers outsteadied the Letran Knights, 81-75, yesterday to boost their qualifying chances in the senior division of the 7th Fr. Martin Cup invitational basketball tournament at the FEU gym.

Oreta and Frederick Hubalde delivered the key blows in the final half as the Tigers improved their record to 5-1 in the cagefest sponsored by Agfa, Photo Plus, Red Bull and SMART-Piltel.

Mapua's Robins remained on top of the group B junior competition by beating the UST Bantams, 72-61, for their sixth straight victory in the opener.

The Ateneo Eaglets trimmed the San Beda Red Cubs, 71-67, in another junior match. With their sixth win in eight outings, the Eaglets boosted their bid to join the Adamson Baby Falcons as semifinalists from Group A.

The Baby Falcons bested UPHR, 85-56, in one of the junior matches at the PCU gym.

In other games at PCU, De La Salle Zobel ripped Aquinas, 62-42, and PCU downed San Beda B, 73-65.

Action will continue today with two women and three junior contests at the FEU gym.

Dacia player to watch in 2001 MBA season

HIGH-FLYING, slam dunking sophomore Bruce Dacia will be the guy to watch, but some rookies are ready to dazzle when the Metropolitan Basketball Association opens its fourth season on June 3.

The 6-foot-2 ½ Dacia, a former MVP of the Cebu Amateur Athletic Association as a University of the Visayas Lancer, made his mark during last year's National Finals won by the San Juan Knights. Known primarily as a slasher, Dacia also turned out to be a dependable medium-range shooter and an able defender.

Lent by Knights owner Sandy Javier to sister team PharmaQuick, Dacia proved his worthiness when he emerged as the leading scorer in the ongoing Philippine Basketball League.

In the same mold as Dacia is Peter June Simon of the Davao Eagles. Only 6-foot flat, Simon of the University of Mindanao is endowed with spring on his feet that made him the province's slam dunk king.

Hapee tries to inch closer toward semis

STANDINGS	W	L
Group A		
Shark	9	1
Ana	6	3
Welcoat	6	3
GIV	6	4
Group B		
Pharmaquick	7	4
Hapee	5	5
Montana	3	7
Ateneo-Pioneer	2	8
Osaka	0	9

GAMES TODAY
(Makati Coliseum)
3:30 p.m.—Osaka vs Montana
5:30 p.m.—Ateneo vs Hapee

HAPEE Toothpaste tries to move a win away from sweeping the quarterfinals as it collides with Ateneo-Pioneer today in the 2001 PBL Chairman's Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

A victory over the Pioneer Insurers in the 5:30 p.m. counter will move the Teeth Sparklers a win away from clinching the incentive for a backdoor entry to the crossover semifinals.

Tournament rules give a team in Group B that sweeps the quarterfinal matches the chance to square off with the Group B top team. The winner faces the Group A No. 4 team for the last semifinals berth.

In the other game, Montaña eyes a repeat of its 69-58 victory on March 27 as it faces Osaka Iridology anew at 3:30 p.m.

UP-Waterfront wins

UNIVERSITY of the Philippines-Waterfront unveiled a 15-6 fourth quarter spurt to ward off Spring Cooking Oil, 70-59, yesterday to gain the top spot with a 6-1 record going into the quarterfinal round of the 1st Crystal Spring PYBL Title Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

In the second game, Regent Cheeseballs nipped University of Assumption, 68-66, to tie its victim for second at 5-2.

Meanwhile, Red Bull and Alaska will play an exhibition match in Balanga, Bataan, on June 2 at 4 p. m.

Brown year's best coach

PHILADELPHIA —Larry Brown has won the NBA's Coach of the Year Award after leading the Philadelphia 76ers to their best record in 16 years, a team source told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The league will announce the winner Wednesday and the source, speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed it will be Brown.

"Everywhere he's been, he gets the job done," Sixers guard Eric Snow said. "He's the best coach I played for." *AP*

RP booters eye revenge vs Laotians

AFTER losing to Laos, 0-2, in Vientiane last weekend, the Philippines hopes to even the score when the two teams clash on Saturday in their last Asian Group I World Cup qualifying match at the Philsports football field in Pasig City.

"The hometown crowd in the Laotian capital played a big role in their team's win so we look forward to do the same support by our own Filipino soccer fans on Saturday in inspiring our own players," said Philippine Football Federation president Rene Adad.

"We all want to see our national team finish their World Cup qualifying series on an upbeat note," added Adad as he encouraged all local sports fans to watch the match which will be open to the public for free.

"This match is easily one of the most important international soccer matches ever played in our country, so all the more reason for everyone to give our Philippine team the morale support it needs," said PFF general secretary Chris Monfort.

According to national team manager Vince Santos, who has been put in charge in organizing Saturday's match, the Philsports stadium will have a fiesta-like atmosphere with local bands invited to hype up the crowd before the 7 p.m. Laos-RP match.

The Filipino booters have shown steady improvement through their first five matches in the World Cup qualifying group which also had Middle Eastern soccer powerhouses Syria and Oman.

Abadia, Arcilla reach TMS fourth round

TOP seed Adelo Abadia outplayed Ronald Vilan, 6-2, 6-1, and No. 2 Johnny Arcilla defeated Arvin Ruel, 6-0, 6-3, yesterday to reach the fourth round the P120,000 TMS Shipping Agency National Open Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Abadia will face No. 16 Jaime Solon, a 6-2, 7-5 winner over Delmar Miranda while Arcilla will meet No. 15 Roland Kraut, who beat Jaime Villanueva, 6-1, 6-3.

In other results, No. 3 Rolando Ruel downed Lennard Lucas, 7-5, 6-0; No. 4 Jessie Lapore whipped Lolito Abadia, 6-0, 6-1; No. 5 Pio Tolentino outclassed Richmond Paguyo, 6-1, 6-0; and No. 6 Joseph Victorino clobbered Gilbert Estrada, 6-2, 6-2.

Also advancing were No. 7 Michael Mora III, No. 8 Niño Salvador, No. 9 Pop Sabandon, No. 10 Antonio Sagansay, No. 11 Ronald Paz, No. 12 Frederick Morgan, No. 14 Cris Cuarto and unranked Luisito Clores.

In the women's singles division, No. 1 Vida Lina Alpuerto beat Julie Em Botor, 6-0, 6-2 to forge a quarterfinal showdown with Vanessa Gutierrez, a 6-1, 6-3 winner over Mariene Salvacion.

Other winners were Josephine Paguyo, Deena Rose Cruz, Ivy de Castro, Czarina Mae Arevalo, Julie Ann Cadiente and Petrona Bantay

Safin tops Sampras

DUESSELDORF, Germany —Pete Sampras, still shaking the rust out of his clay court game for the French Open, was beaten 7-6 (0), 7-5 Tuesday by Russia's Marat Safin at the World Team Cup. Safin needed 1 hour, 43 minutes to edge an error-prone Sampras at the last tune-up for the grand slam event, which starts Monday *AP*

SkyCable coverage

CATCH these champions and more on the French Open 2001—live and exclusive over SkyCable (Channel 17 in Metro Manila) from May 28 to June 11. The round-the-clock coverage begins at 4:30 p.m. on Monday and runs all the way to the men's and women's finals.

Injury of Gerry's foe exaggerated—Salud

"IT was quite exaggerated."

This was the reaction of lawyer-sportsman Rudy Salud when he learned yesterday that the Japan Boxing Commission (JBC) had asked for a two-month postponement of the world title fight between the Phlippines' Gerry Peñalosa and Japan's Masamori Tokuyama.

Tokuyama retained his World Boxing Council flyweight crown by knocking out Korean In Joo Cho on May 20 in Seoul.

The Japanese champion said he hurt his hand in the fight.

As the mandatory challenger, the No. 1-ranked Peñalosa is supposed to fight Tokuyama on Aug. 20 or, at the latest, early September for the 115-pound crown.

Peñalosa was the WBC champion until he lost the title on points to Cho in 1998 in Seoul. Peñalosa lost anew to Cho in January 2000, again on points.

PEÑALOSA

It was Shigeru Kojima, JBC's executive secretary, who asked the World Boxing Council through a letter to move the August title showdown to October "because Tokuyama needs medical treatment."

Kojima said a doctor's diagnosis indicated that Tokuyama had "a bruise of his right hand joint."

But Salud disputed that.

"Our Gerry Peñalosa also bruised his left fist in his last fight," Salud told Jose Sulaiman, the Mexican WBC president, in an overseas telephone call. "But the bruise was gone in three days."

Peñalosa knocked out Japan's Shigeru Kojima in the first round on May 5 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Salud told Sulaiman the two-month treatment for Tokuyama's bruised hand "was quite exaggerated."

Salud said that "to accept a two-month extension for a bruise will cast doubt on the stature of the Japan Boxing Commission and World Boxing Council."

Earlier, Sulaiman ordered that neither Tokuyama nor Peñalosa "could fight anybody else before they fight each other." *Al S. Mendoza*

Tiger Woods named Sportsman of the Year

MONTE CARLO, Monaco —U.S. golfer Tiger Woods was named Sportsman of the Year at the 2001 Laureus World Sports Awards on Tuesday.

Woods, who has won four titles in his last five events, beat British Olympic rowing champion Steve Redgrave, Formula One driver Michael Schumacher and swimmers Ian Thorpe and Pieter van den Hoogenband for the title.

Woods also won the inaugural award last year.

The Laureus world sports academy presented the awards, which honor the most distinguished athletes in a variety of disciplines, at a star-studded ceremony in Monaco. Among the guests were Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Monica Bellucci and Prince Albert of Monaco. *AP*

Maddogan at Villamor

THE MADDOGAN Golf Club May tournament reels off today at the Villamor Golf Club with telecom giant Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) hosting this month's affair. The Maddogan Golf Club is composed of sports editors and media decision makers from the country's major dailies. Up for grabs are valuable tournament and raffle prizes. PLDT first vice president and Philippine Basketball Association chair Ignatius F. Yenko said the hosting of the Maddogan event is part of the telecom company's commitment to foster fellowship and goodwill through sports.

FILE PHOTO

CANTADA: "Time to move on."

RP Open is Cantada's pro debut

MANY-time national team member Gerard Cantada has turned pro and will have his debut in the 86th Philippine Open June 28 to July 1 at Wack Wack.

After the Open, though, Cantada, 24, will concentrate on teaching kids and olds alike as he intends to put more meaning on the words "teaching pro" on the local scene.

"It's time for me to move on," said Cantada who, in his 17-year career, has won a total of 18 titles. "I've done my part in amateur golf."

He had a self-imposed retirement in 1999 when his father, junior golf organizer Edgardo "Tito Boy" Cantada, had a spat with top local golf officials.

But he came back with a bang in 2000 by winning the DHL Open and topping the qualifying tournaments for the World Amateur Championships and the Putra Cup.

9 unbeaten bets derby favorites

NINE unbeaten entries with two victories each are the favorites in today's finale of the "12th Ucap/PB San Pablo Sagupaan Guts and Glory 6-Cock Derby" at Mandaluyong Coliseum starting at 6 p.m.

Sponsors are Sagupaan Super feeds and Lakpue Drug Inc.

The frontrunners are Ucap president Butch Macasaet (BJ Greenwood), Ram Lopez (Altuz I), sabong idol Patrick Antonio (Sagupaan Winning Line), Jet Fernando (San Pedro GP Eagle), lawyer Rudy salud (Winning Time DVH), Esting Teopaco (EGT Stingers), Raymond Velayo (Arnis Master), Pepito Ngo (Mr. Fatman) and RWS Bird Farm (Wakee salud).

Meanwhile, the "Mandaluyong Coliseum 9-Cock International Derby" on May 29, 31 and June 2 hosted by Vic Yu and engineer Sonny Lagon gets a big boost yesterday with the confirmed participation of battle-scarred veterans Henry Tan of High Chapparal and Dynasty fame, Rep. James Chiongbian (King Cobra), Bacolod cockers Choy Ampil, Baby Chua, Tony Trebol and Bobby Ledesma, NCA stalwarts Rudy Albano, engineer Pacifico Berin, Gov. Yñares, John Capinpin and the famous Madlambayan brothers, among others.

The hosts expect more than 70 participants and among them are US cockers Buddy Mann of Alabama, Bobby Jones of Texas, Richard Wilburn, Jerry Douglas and Chuck berry of Oklahoma.

For inquiries, please contact 534-4110, 531-4003 and 531-4005.

Wack Wack to host Philippine senior

WACK WACK Golf and Country Club will host the Philippine Senior Amateur Open golf championship for the second straight time on June 6-8.

Wack Wack's West Course will be sued for the 54-hole event that will feature the country's top senior par busters 55 years and older.

S.P. Malbarosa, president of the Federation of Philippine Senior Golfers, Inc. said that there will be nine awards to be disputed foremost among which is the overall championship.

The others are the overall net and the 36-hole competitions in the 55-59 years, 60-64 years, 65-69, 70-74, 75 and above, ladies and guest divisions.

Registration is now on-going. Entry fee is P2,750 for the Open division while those playing the age-group brackets will pay P2,000 for 36 holes and P2,750 for three days of play. All entries must submit certified handicap indexes as of April 30.

The tourney is held under the auspices of the National Golf Association of the Philippines in cooperation with the FPSGI and the Wack Wack Senior golfers Associations Inc.

Peace chess starts May 26 at Land Bank

THE EIGHTH leg of the 2001 Philippine Executive Active Chess Express (PEACE 2001) gets underway on May 26, Saturday, at 1 p.m. at Land Bank's Multi-Purpose Hall along Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City.

PEACE 2001 is being sponsored by DNS Company and organzied by the Active Chess Center of Asia (Acca) in cooperation with Belgosa Media Systems Inc., Land Bank, Topmost Engineering, Travel Café and Omni Business Center.

Executives and professionals who wish to join PEACE 2001 may contact the Acca with tel. 892-8759 for other details.

Dentist Jenny Mayor is leading the grand prix standings in the Harmony section with 116 points, while Cyrus Atienza of Land Bank is showing the way in the Serenity section with 122 points.

The top 10 in the Harmony Section: Jenny Mayor, 116 points; Dennis San Juan, 112; Douglas Peña, 102; Gary Legaspi, 101; Romel Asoque, 96; Tyrone Guya, 82; Jose Aspiras, 81; Leodgario Ricaña 71; Ed Orozco, 69; and Antonio Santos, 64.

Mendoza co-leader

WOMAN International Master Beverly Mendoza gave Carmina Joy Mariano a slap on the wrist yesterday as they shared the lead with five points apiece in the Girls U-20 category after Round 6 of the 2001 National Age Group Chess Championships in Mandaluyong City.

Mendoza, an incoming junior at the Araullo University-Cabanatuan, broke the five-game winning string of the black-playing Mariano in 39 moves of a King's Indian Defense-Saemisch variation.

31 NSAs told to settle accounts

By June Navarro

UNABLE to solve its liquidation woes to the Commission on Audit, the Philippine Sports Commission will seek the help of the Office of the Solicitor General to compel 31 national sports associations to account for the roughly P25 million they got from the government.

Chair Carlos Tuason said the PSC would give the 31 NSAs until June 15 to settle their accounts which were granted as financial aid by the government from July 1, 1998 to April 30, 2001.

Failure to do so, Tuason stressed out, would coerce the PSC to forward the case to the OSG which will hand down the legal remedies to solve the irregularities.

"Just present the receipts and the documents and these NSAs will automatically be off the hook," Tuason told the INQUIRER. "Otherwise, they will be held answerable to the law for not liquidating government money."

Free from financial obligation are the NSAs from bowling, fencing and taekwondo.

In a letter to the PSC board, PSC resident auditor Salvacion Delos Angeles noted that P24,888,295 is still unaccounted for starting July 1, 1998 and P9,577,128 unsettled financial assistance prior to the said date.

PSC policy states that no funds will be released to any NSA with pending accounts. Liquidation should also be made 30 days after the completion of an event where the financial aid was used.

Though the NSAs' outstanding balances are subject to verification, PSC commissioner Richie Garcia said they gave the sports bodies one week to attest on the veracity of the COA report.

3 RP squads joining Asian university tilt

THE 2nd Asian University Basketball Championship will push through on June 3-9 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum with two foreign teams in tow.

Beijing Shougong Industrial College and Chinese-Taipei University Sports Federation have confirmed their participation in the tournament organized by the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

South Korea's Kun Kook University, which had earlier committed to compete, had to back out because the Korean school league would have opened by that time.

Originally slated last month, the AUBC had to be reset because of funding problems and the leadership squabble in the BAP.

The local entries are National Collegiate Athletic Association champion College of St. Benilde, National Inter-Collegiate titlist St. Francis of Assisi and University Athletic Association of the Philippines runner-up Far Eastern University.

Another local team would be tapped to take over Kun Kook's slot, according to the BAP secretariat.

Philip Ella Juico and Fernando Carrasco have been named co-chair of the event first held in Manila in 1998 with University of Manila emerging as champion.

Korean cage legend Shin dong Pa co-heads the technical committee with Chinese Taipei's Wang Jen Sen. The members are BAP administrative officer Danny Lopez and Teddy Talens of the national coaches commission.

The games will be shown over IBC 13.

Roy Luarca

SPORTSWATCH

'Computer' tops 'em

COMPUTER Minds shared the spotlight with celebrities and stars in the Rexona beach football tournament recently by beating Mama Sitas, 2-1, and ruling the Quicksand Open at the Subic Waterfront in Olongapo. Paolo Relucio copped MVP honors as he powered Computer Minds to the grand finals slated in Dumaguete City. Other qualifiers from Luzon were Viva, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and Mama Sita.

5K fun run slated

THE ASSOCIATION of Makati Industries Inc. will start the 2nd AMI Sportsfest 2001 with a 5-km fun run this Saturday starting at 5:30 a.m. from Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue (Telecoms Plaza) to Edsa, Ayala Avenue and back to Gil Puyat. Basketball and volleyball events will start on June 27 at the Makati Coliseum. For inquiries, call the secretariat at 843-4149, 844-5661 loc. 272 and 893-2936.

Mandarin race on tap

MANDARIN Oriental-Manila will hold its fifth 5-kilometer fun run at 5 a.m. on June 3 at its car park. Dubbed as 'Snaking around Makati,' the race has two categories: 30 years and below and 31 years and above. For details, call Mandarin Oriental Health Club at 750-8888 loc. 2331/2330.

Alamaras star anew

DARWIN, Australia—Breaststroke specialists Norton and Ali Alamara once more booked the gold and silver medals in the 50 meters on Tuesday night as the Philippine delegation continued to make ripples in the 2001 Arafura Games in this Northern Territory capital. Norton followed up his victory in the 100m breaststroke by taking the 50m version in 32.15 seconds, beating elder brother Ali, who clocked 33.68. The twin medals gave the Filipinos 3 golds and 6 silvers after four days of hostilities.

SPORTS ON TV

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BASKETBALL: NBA Western Conference Finals - Lakers vs Spurs, Game 2 (delayed - May 22) at noon on RPN 9 (r –5:30 p.m. on IBC 13)

1987 LA Lakers - Drive for Five at 6 p.m. (r) on ESPN

GOLF: Mastercard Colonial, Final Round at 8 a.m. (r), Highlights at 11:30 p.m. on Star Sports

LPGA Electrolux USA Championship, Final Round at 11:30 a.m. (r) on ESPN

BILLIARDS: 2001 WPBA Classic Tour, Semifinal #2 at 5 p.m. on ESPN

VOLLEYBALL: National Collegiate Men's Volleyball Championship, Final at 7 a.m. on ESPN

SNOOKER: 2001 Embassy World Championships Quarterfinal #1 at 2 p.m. (r) on ESPN

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Race 3—1. Sweep Away 2. Rose and Toy 3. Dominant Dancer 4. Waw

Race 4—1. Best of All 2. Perfect Lyza 3. Lucky Swing

Race 5—1. Fair Warning 2. Knows Love 3. Plus Factor 4. Go Johnny Go

Race 6—1. Grand Dancer 2. Marvelous Jay 3. Leading Light 4. Pep Talk

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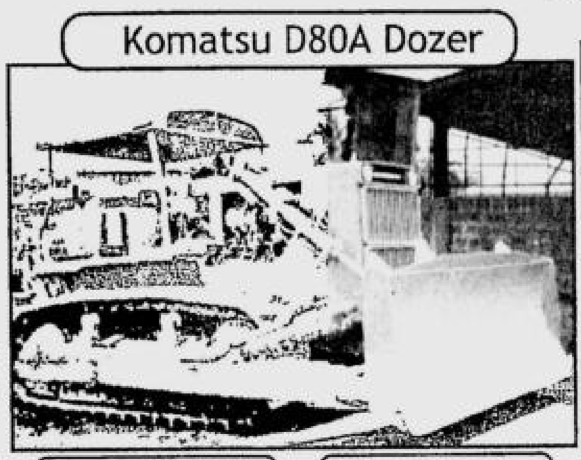

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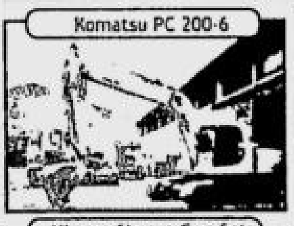

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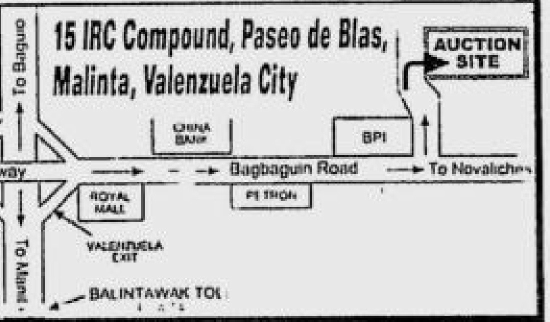

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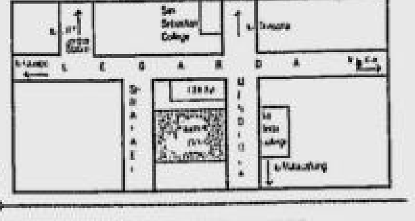

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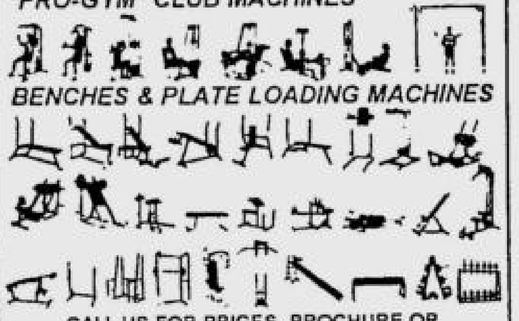

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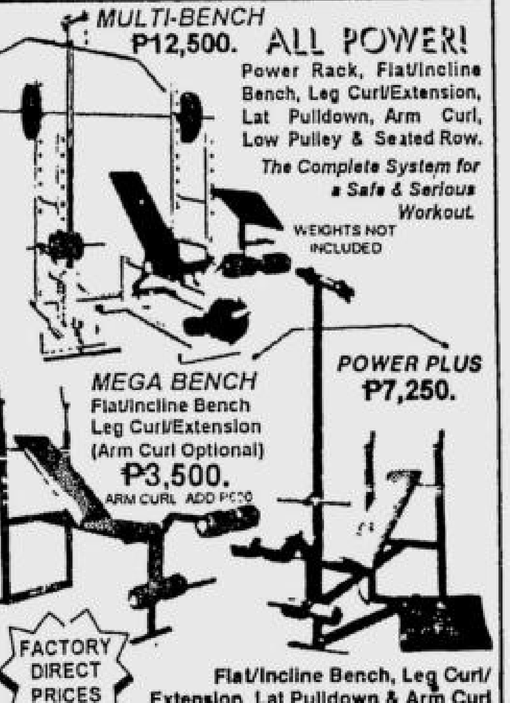

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Globe-sponsored Centex inaugurated

Above, leading the ribbon-cutting ceremonies during the inauguration of CENTEX-Batangas are (starting from second from left): Singaporean Ambassador Jackie Foo; Centex Volunteer Fernando Zobel de Ayala; Ms. Kit Zobel; Presidential Management Staff (PMS) Secretary Vicky Garchitorena; Globe President and CEO Gerardo Ablaza, Jr.; DECS Secretary Raul Roco; Globe Chief Operations Adviser Edward Ying; Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas; and Bauan Mayor Hermie Dolor.

Telecommunications company Globe Telecom recently inaugurated the Center of Excellence in Public Elementary Education (CENTEX), a special learning center for children from underprivileged families in Bauan, Batangas. Present during the inauguration were Education Secretary Raul Roco, Presidential Management Staff Secretary Vicky Garchitorena, Ayala Land Inc. Chairman Fernando Zobel and wife Kit Zobel, Ambassador Jacky Foo of Singapore, Batangas Gov. Hermilando Mandanas and Globe president/CEO Gerardo Ablaza Jr.

A multi-sectoral undertaking, CENTEX-Batangas is a collaboration of Ayala Foundation, the provincial government of Batangas and the Department of Education, Culture and Sports (DECS). CENTEX-Batangas is principally funded by Globe Telecom.

The school selects the students based on a pre-test administered to applicants, admitting only the highest-scoring children. The accepted students are entitled to education assistance, as well as free school supplies, school uniforms and books. Transportation and food costs of the students are also subsidized by CENTEX.

Globe president/CEO Gerardo Ablaza Jr. says that Globe's contribution to CENTEX-Batangas is one way of sharing the benefits of Globe's growth with others. "We want to give back to our patrons by providing the Batangas community with good quality education," he says. This is also in line with Globe's commitment to be a socially responsible corporate citizen.

The Ayala Group is planning to put up 98 more CENTEX schools, each with a budget of P60 million. CENTEX will have an endowment fund whose earnings will be used to ensure the continuity of the program.

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To give Filipino children the chance to develop into well-rounded human beings through quality education. This is the goal of the Center of Excellence in Public Elementary Education (CENTEX), a special learning center in Bauan, Batangas principally funded by Globe Telecom. CENTEX aims to bring the highest standards of education to bright children from underprivileged families. The center strives to produce graduates who will be leaders -- men and women who are not only academically excellent but socially responsible, capable of making decisions based on the community they serve. Having opened its doors in October 2000 to 76 kindergarten students, CENTEX has already marked much success in instilling good quality education to its deserving young pupils.

To know more about how you can help CENTEX, call 894-5620 or fax 813-4488.

METRO
LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

City jail claims 11th victim

DOMINADOR BORGONIO, 46, is the 11th inmate to die of an illness at the Manila City Jail since November last year. Borgonio, who is up for murder, had tuberculosis and complained of chest pains before he was taken to the jail infirmary and then to the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center in Sta. Cruz where he died yesterday. Jail authorities reported there are 13 more inmates confined at the jail's infirmary for various ailments.

Jerome Aning

Man rushes mother to hospital after he killed her

A20

Desierto goes after Berroya

By Michael Lim Ubac

DESIERTO

OMBUDSMAN Aniano Desierto yesterday said he was "taking direct charge" of the investigation of Senior Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, chief of the Philippine National Police Intelligence Group, and his men for the May 17 killing of a chief steward of the New World Hotel and an 18-year-old girl.

In a press conference, Desierto said he has already instructed Orlando Casimiro, deputy ombudsman for the military, to assemble a high-level panel composed of four veteran investigators to probe the alleged liabilities of Berroya and his PNP-IG men.

"The Office of the Ombudsman, on its own, can investigate any case even without a formal complaint from any party under the *motu propio* principle," Desierto said.

The Ombudsman made the decision to immediately take action on the case even after Director Reynaldo Wycoco of the National Bureau of Investigation said he was starting a separate probe of the incident.

It is unclear whether the NBI investigation would still be relevant since the Office of the Ombudsman, a higher body, has already taken up the case.

The May 17 incident also prompted Sen. Rene Cayetano to call for a Senate inquiry.

Cayetano said he was alarmed over the rash of incidents where lawmen mistake ordinary citizens for criminals.

"These incidents have been occurring too often to the detriment of innocent motorists," Cayetano said. "These wanton and reckless acts undermine the trust and confidence of the citizens in the police force."

Ombudsman senior prosecutor Alberto Mislang will lead the probe panel.

"Prosecutor Mislang's panel of four was directed to complete the investigation and submit its final report within 15 days," Desierto said.

He added the panel would establish whether the 10 members of the IG violated the PNP's Rules of Engagement when they sprayed bullets on Fernando Lozada's car and whether they should be charged criminally or administratively

In ordering the NBI investigation, Wycoco said he meant to erase doubts of a whitewash.

An NBI source said at least seven witnesses are already in the custody of the NBI Intelligence Special Operations Division.

The witnesses—mostly bystanders—saw how members of the CIDG and IG fired on Lozada's car.

But lawyer Oscar Embido, ISOD chief, refused to confirm or deny this, saying "I could not reveal these matters for security reasons."

On May 17 about 8:30 p.m., Lozada, 48, was driving his blue Mitsubishi Lancer (TKM-265) with Marian Uson, 18, and Lozada's daughter

DESIERTO/A19

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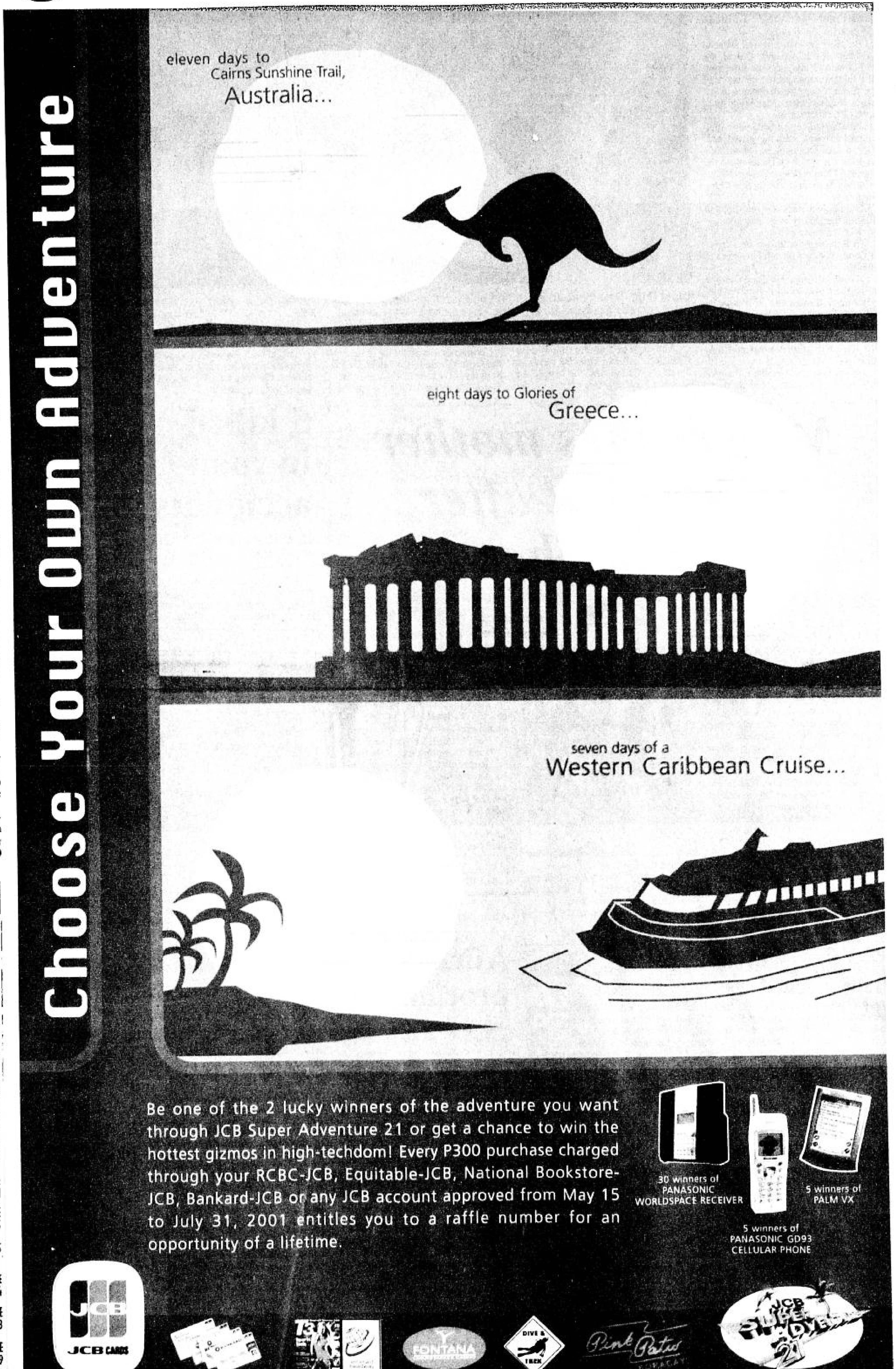

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Cops bust kidnap gang

By Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon

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ARMANDO CABRAL
ENRIQUEZ
KIDNAP FOR RANSOM
COMIA
NAP FOR RANSOM

Chief Supt. Nestorio Gualberto (forefront) identifies three suspected members of a kidnap gang (left to right): Alfredo Concepcion, Armando Cabral and Luisito Comia.
VALHANDUMON

POLICE have busted a kidnap gang preying on Chinese-Filipino traders in Metro Manila, Bulacan and Pampanga, with the arrest of three gang men in their Bulacan safehouses on Sunday.

Bulacan lawmen arrested Alfredo Concepcion, 53; Armando Cabral, 40; and Luisito Comia, 45. The three, police said, were suspected members of the "Esting Gang" which operates in Sta. Maria, Bulacan, Metro Manila and other parts of Central Luzon.

Bulacan police director Senior Supt. Edgardo Acuña said the group kidnapped Jake Ocampo, 28, whom they mistook for Alfonso Tan, son of the owner of Filmills Enterprises and Manufacturing Corp. in Barangay Sta. Clara, Bulacan.

Ocampo was abducted on May 8 in front of the factory as he was about to drive off on board a Honda.

He is the nephew and personal driver of Chona Palacios, general manager of Filmills.

The armed suspects dragged Ocampo inside their Mitsubishi Adventure and took him to a safehouse in Pampanga where they kept him for four days.

Acuña said the group later realized they took the wrong victim, but they still asked P10 million in ransom from Palacios.

On May 12, after four days of negotiations, the suspects agreed to lower their demand to P250,000.

Acuña said Palacios delivered P220,000 cash and P30,000 worth of jewelry to Cabral near the exit of the Meycauayan toll gate of the North Luzon Expressway.

Witnesses told police the group used the same vehicle in the March 14 kidnapping of Chinese-Filipino trader Marco Sia, owner of Silver Spring Farm in Barangay Bulac, Bulacan.

Acuña said Sia and Ocampo were abducted in the same fashion, with the gunmen blocking the victims' cars and taking them at gunpoint.

Stupid voters

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SENIOR Supt. Reynaldo Berroya can never live down the death of two innocent civilians who were mistaken for kidnappers by his men.

Berroya has admitted the fault of his men at the Philippine National Police Intelligence Group. The policemen fired at a car they thought was being ridden by kidnappers.

Killed were Fernando Lozada, 48, chief steward at the New World Hotel, and Marian Uson, 18. Uson was a classmate of Lozada's daughter Clarissa, 17, who was also wounded in the attack. Uson was hitching a ride in Lozada's car.

***

This is not the first time Berroya's men had figured in the killing of innocent persons who were mistaken for criminals.

In the early 1990s, when Berroya was head of Task Force Lawin of the defunct Presidential Anti-Crime Commission (PACC), his men killed a lawyer who was riding in a car with two policemen who were facing charges in court for drug trafficking. The two cops were the lawyer's clients. Berroya's men were after the two cops who were killed along with the lawyer.

Nothing came out of that case which hogged the headlines at the time.

But Berroya and his men at the Intelligence Group will have a hard time extricating themselves from the latest bungling.

***

Murder charges are being readied by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) against the policemen who figured in that stupid shootout.

I suggest the relatives of the victims also file a multimillion- peso suit against the government.

In the United States, a similar blunder by the police would be penalized by the court with multimillion-dollar awards for the victims or their relatives.

***

If the courts would grant the Lozadas and Usons millions of pesos in damages, the police would no longer be careless with the lives of innocent citizens.

Aside from the huge reward to the victims' relatives, the policemen involved in the killing of Lozada and Uson should be jailed for their stupidity

Even in the heat of pursuing criminals, police should take the safety of innocent citizens as the primary consideration. Even if the criminals being pursued were able to escape, there should be no recriminations over the escape if, in the process, some innocent lives were saved.

***

Convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos has been reelected for the second time by his constituents in the first district of Zamboanga del Norte

That only shows there are more stupid voters than there are intelligent ones in that congressional district.

But it's not only in Zamboanga del Norte where voters are stupid. They're all over the country.

Look who we've elected senators in the recent polls.

***

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) should not begrudge President Macapagal-Arroyo for favoring house arrest for the disgraced leader Erap.

The house- arrest scheme was forced on GMA by the Iglesia ni Cristo (INC), a meddler of government affairs.

GMA didn't have a choice but to go with the wishes of the meddlesome religious sect. She wanted all, if not most, of her candidates at the People Power Coalition to win. INC members vote for candidates endorsed by the church leadership.

But, come to think of it, it's not only the vote-rich INC which interferes in government affairs. The Catholic Church is also a pain in the neck of present and previous administrations because of its interference in government affairs.

***

Even if GMA favors house arrest for Erap, the final say will have to come from the Sandiganbayan which is trying the plunder cases against the former president.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto does not favor house arrest for Erap and his son Jinggoy. Being the government prosecutor, Desierto's word carries a lot of weight.

Erap and his son will just have to stay at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center where he is confined for some imagined ailments That is, if the Sandiganbayan does not grant his request that he and his son be confined in his house in Greenhills, San Juan.

***

GMA cannot be blamed by the Iglesia ni Cristo if the Sandiganbayan does not grant the house-arrest scheme for Erap and Jinggoy.

She can't dictate on the Sandiganbayan which is an independent body. The Judiciary is a co-equal branch of the Executive.

Let's see if the INC can also dictate on the judicial branch of the government as it does on the executive branch.

***

You won't be reading this column for a week or so

I will be having my annual vacation.

However, if there are important items that I will encounter during my vacation, I will break my leave and write about them.

Man rushes mother to hospital after killing her

By Agnes E. Donato

A FORMER drug dependent on Monday allegedly strangled to death his own mother in their house in Pasig City after she supposedly nagged him about his drinking and smoking.

Emmanuel Ramos, 32, of Barangay Kapitolyo in Pasig, a former sales manager of a video company, allegedly strangled his 71-year-old mother Mary with a three-meter electrical wire about 4 p.m. on Monday.

Ramos himself rushed his mother Mary to the Medical City where she was proclaimed dead on arrival.

Mary died from head injuries and she bore strangulation marks on her neck, police said.

Ramos apparently got mad at his mother after she scolded him for his excessive drinking and smoking, according to PO3 Rodrigo de Dios.

Police said Mary was standing by the garage door when Ramos took the electrical wire, crept from behind her, and then strangled her.

When Mary's body became limp and heavy, she apparently fell and hit her head on the floor, police said.

Ramos must have been surprised at what he had done and rushed Mary to the hospital where doctors pronounced her already dead.

PO3 De Dios, who accompanied Ramos back to their house, said he did not know that the former drug dependent was responsible for his mother's death.

De Dios said he only realized that Ramos had something to do with Mary's death after he told him to pray for his mother's soul then heard him say, "Mother, forgive me."

But upon confrontation, De Dios said Ramos admitted that he strangled his own mother

Police said Ramos was a drug dependent who was rehabilitated only three months ago

Mary was found with strands of hair in her hands, a sign that she had struggled with her assailant by pulling at his hair, police said.

The hair samples were brought to the PNP crime laboratory for comparison with Ramos' hair.

Police have arrested Ramos who is facing parricide charges

5 killed in road accidents

By Christian V. Esguerra and Louie Jon Sanchez

FIVE persons were killed and 18 others were injured in three separate vehicular accidents yesterday morning at the North Luzon Expressway in Valenzuela City and nearby Pampanga.

Nilo Torres, 27, of San Vicente, Apalit, Pampanga, was killed when the passenger Toyota Tamaraw FX he was riding rammed into a six-wheeler truck parked on the shoulder of the express way in Barangay Canumay, Valenzuela at 5:45 a.m. yesterday.

Injured were Jeric and Marilyn Ocampo, Reynani and Marilyn Bata, Maria Victoria Ocampo, Boy Mendoza, Saudi Manansala, Marilyn Bautista, Raymundo Quiros, and Michael Navarro.

The Manila-bound Tamaraw, with license plate number TVL-684 and driven by Navarro, overtook another vehicle through the right shoulder of the expressway, said Manny Frades of the Philippine National Construction Corp.

It then rammed into the truck, with license plate number UFZ-427, which had just pulled over on the right shoulder because of a defect in its transmission, investigation showed

A van, with license plate number WFW 430, following the Tamaraw also smashed into the Tamaraw's rear.

The Tamaraw was a total wreck after it was sandwiched in between the truck and the van, Frades said.

Most of the people injured were passengers of the Tamaraw.

In Pampanga, Edna Udaundo, 16, and James Galisinaw, 15, residents of Ilocos Norte, and a certain Arlene, 15, were killed when a dump truck sliced through the left portion of their passenger jeepney in Mabalacat at 5 a.m. yesterday.

Rodrigo Galisinaw, 42, and his wife Roberta, 36, Lisa Madariago, 25, Gina Reyes, 18, and Franklin Andres, 46, were injured in the mishap.

Investigation showed that the dump truck bound for Pampanga and driven by Rodrigo Obidoza hit the passenger jeepney (PXU-962), which was running on the opposite direction.

The jeepney's driver, Adriano Gorospe, 29, was unharmed.

Four hours later, the driver of another Toyota Tamaraw FX, with plate number VCZ 847, lost control of his vehicle and rammed it into the railings of a bridge in San Simon, Pampanga.

One of the vehicle's passengers, Catalina Kagampan, 70, died before reaching the Good Shepherd Hospital in Pulilan, Bulacan.

METROWATCH

Baby rescued

OPERATIVES of the Central Police District have rescued a 4-month-old baby from kidnappers during an operation in Dinalupihan, Bataan, weeks after she was abducted inside her parents' residence in North Fairview, Quezon City. The suspects, identified as Carmen Maputol and Ernesto Ocampo Jr., were nabbed inside their hideout in Barangay Roosevelt, Dinalupihan, Bataan. The arrest was made on May 14, three days after the baby's uncle Pablito Osuna reported to the police the baby's abduction. Supt. Remedios Escober, head of CPD's Women's and Children's Concerned Desk, dispatched a team led by SPO4 Catherine Borda accompanied by relatives of the suspects, whom police had convinced to give them assistance. Cases of kidnapping and theft will be filed against the suspects before the office of the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office. *Tricia Bona D. Pablo*

Robbers kill worker

SUSPECTED members of the Akyat-Bahay Gang murdered yesterday a factory worker in Pasay City but investigators found nothing missing from the victim's house.

Police identified the victim as Ricardo Cordova, 41, a factory worker at Philips Food Corp., residing at 313 Edang St. Pasay City. Cordova died on the spot after sustaining several stab wounds in various parts of the body. PO3 Edgar Tabuyan of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Pasay City Police said the incident happened around 4 a.m. inside the Cordova home. Investigation showed that Josie, the victim's wife, entered her husband's bedroom around 5 a.m. and was surprised to find him dead. The couple slept in separate bedrooms. Probers discovered the victim's room in disarray. They said they found no signs of forced entry and the victim's belongings were intact. There was speculation Akyat-Bahay members, after breaking into the house, could have been caught red-handed by the victim, which later led to his stabbing. *Alcuin Papa and Allison Lopez*

Case dismissed

THE MAKATI City Prosecutor's Office (MCPO) has dismissed the estafa case filed by Paul Daza, president of Philippine Laminates Inc. (PLI) against Ergonomics Systems Phils. (Ergo) officer, Philip Ng for lack of probable cause and basis.

In its resolution, the Prosecutor's Office indicated that Philip Ng and PLI issued checks in favor of each other in order to settle various obligations. It also stated that the transaction entered into by both parties is civil in nature between an importer/distributor and a customer, and that the failure to comply with the exchange of checks according to agreement is enforceable by civil action for collection.

The MCPO also said there was no evidence of deceit employed on the part of Ergo, prior to and simultaneous with the contracting of the obligation. Neither was there an instance wherein false or fraudulent acts were committed by Ergo. Ng expressed his gratitude for the swift implementation of the decision, and reiterated his firm belief in the Philippine judicial system.

New Pasay congresswoman

CIVIC leader and councilor Connie Dy has emerged the winner in Pasay City's congressional race. Dy, who garnered a total of 52,015 votes—more than 27,000 votes than her closest rival—was officially proclaimed Saturday night as the city's new congresswoman by Pasay Commission on Elections chair Lope Gayo. Virtually unknown outside Pasay City, Dy was supported by majority of its 201 barangay captains and the Iglesia ni Cristo. Dy, a businesswoman and interior design consultant, first ran and won as councilor in 1998, landing second in a field of 38 candidates. She built the President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo-Connie Dy Poverty Alleviation Center at 40 Dominguez St., Malibay, Pasay.

Atienza proclaimed

AMID the cheering of his supporters, re-electionist Manila Mayor Lito Atienza was officially proclaimed winner by the City Board of Canvassers at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Malate yesterday afternoon.

CBC chair Emilio Santos announced the winning mayoral bets around 4:30 a.m., as soon as the tabulators from the city's first and fifth districts submitted their tallies.

Atienza, a Liberal Party stalwart, garnered 255,021 votes or 60 percent of the voters who cast their ballots on May 14. His closest challenger, former Interior Secretary Alfredo Lim, obtained 199,120 votes, or about 25 percent of the total votes cast. Former Rep. Amado Bagatsing, the candidate of the People Power Coalition, obtained 127,497 votes. It would be recalled that Bagatsing lost to Atienza in the 1998 polls by some 4,000 votes. *Jerome Aning*

Desierto . . .

(From page A19)

Clarissa, 17, on board. At the same time, members of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and IG were pursuing suspected kidnappers of Mark Harry Bacalla on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City, according to the police report.

Bacalla, 23, son of a former judge of the Quezon City regional trial court, was abducted after attending a classmate's party at Fairview, Quezon City on May 2.

Police said the kidnappers later took Bacalla to a safehouse in Cupayo, Nueva Ecija, where they killed him.

Taxi driver Zaldy Cariño, who was earlier nabbed for his alleged involvement in the kidnapping, tipped off police that his companions were on board a blue Mitsubishi Lancer.

This prompted Berroya's men to trail two vehicles. But one of the vehicles managed to speed away, prompting backup policemen to chase the other car, which turned out to be Lozada's.

The CIDG and IG agents tried to flag down the Lancer, but Lozada, seeing heavily armed men blocking his way, reportedly decided to make a run for it and drove through the blockade.

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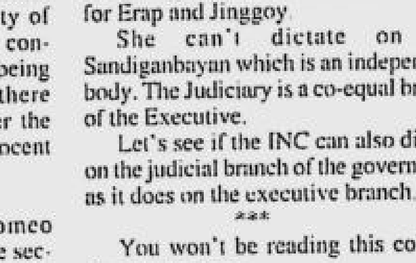

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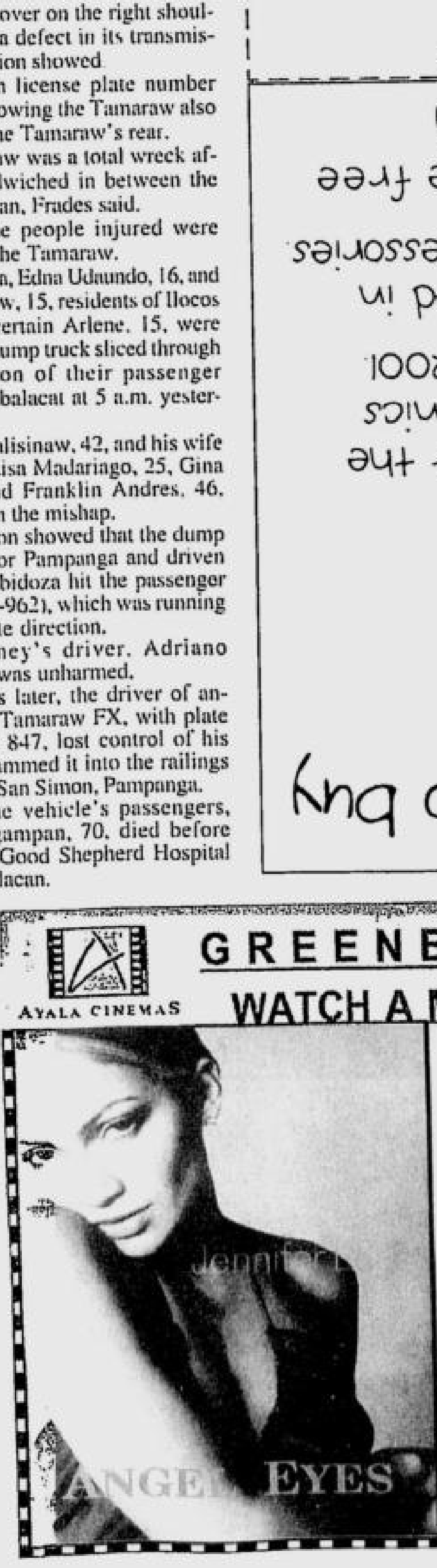

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6	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
7	DOLBY SURROUND	VALENTINE
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8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
9	DOLBY SURROUND	TRAFFIC
10	DOLBY SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
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12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	SOMEONE LIKE YOU

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1	DOLBY SURROUND	BALIKTARAN
2	DOLBY SURROUND	THE POSSESSED
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	KAMASUTRA 2001
4	DOLBY SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
5	DOLBY SURROUND	TRAFFIC
6	DOLBY SURROUND	VALENTINE
7	DTS	THE MUMMY RETURN
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	THE MUMMY RETURN
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	NARINIG MO NA BA ANG LATEST
10	DOLBY SURROUND	15 MINUTES
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	EXIT WOUNDS
12	DOLBY SURROUND	SOMEONE LIKE YOU

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1	ULTRA SURROUND	NARINIG MO NA BA ANG LATEST
2	ULTRA SURROUND	KAMASUTRA 2001
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	THE MUMMY RETURN
4	ULTRA SURROUND	TRAFFIC
5	ULTRA SURROUND	15 MINUTES
6	ULTRA SURROUND	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
7	ULTRA SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	VALENTINE
9	ULTRA SURROUND	THE POSSESSED
10	ULTRA SURROUND	BALIKTARAN

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	TRAFFIC
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	KAMASUTRA 2001
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALIKTARAN

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	ULTRA SURROUND	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
3	ULTRA SURROUND	SWEET NOVEMBER
4	ULTRA SURROUND	THE CROW
5	ULTRA SURROUND	THE SEDUCER
6	ULTRA SURROUND	BALIKTARAN
7	DOLBY SURROUND	THWE MUMMY RETURN

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	ULTRA SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
3	ULTRA SURROUND	ATTACK FORCE
4	ULTRA SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN
5	ULTRA SURROUND	3,000 MILES TO GRACELAND
6	ULTRA SURROUND	BALIKTARAN
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
8	ULTRA SURROUND	SWEET NOVEMBER

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1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	VALENTINE
3	DOLBY SURROUND	THE POSSESSED
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	BALIKTARAN
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	ORAS NA PARA LUMABAN
6	DOLBY SURROUND	THE MUMMY RETURN

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4	VALENTINE	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	SOMEONE LIKE YOU	in DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
6	THE MUMMY RETURNS	in DTS/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
7	SPY KIDS	in DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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3	THE MUMMY RETURNS	in DTS-DIGITAL SOUND
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4 GOLD (DTS)	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE MUMMY RETURNS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	TRAFFIC
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE MUMMY RETURNS
8	BALIKTARAN
9	THE POSSESSED
10	VALENTINE

Pearl Plaza Cinemas (Parañaque) tel. 853 4486

1	PILAK
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3 (DTS)	
4	HANNIBAL
5	VITAL PART
6 (DTS)	

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Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3 (Kalaw) tel 536 4315

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2 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
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Masagana CINEMA 2000 (Pasay) tel 831 6603

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3	PILAK

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1	RESERVE
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3	SPY KIDS
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE MUMMY RETURN
5	VALENTINE

Metropolis (Alabang) tel 543 4001

1	BALIKTARAN
2	KAMASUTRA 2001
3	TRAFFIC
4	RESERVE
5	SPY KIDS
6	THE MUMMY RETURN
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8	VALENTINE

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3	MASARAP UNANG KAGAT
4	DALAWA SI EBA

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1 (DOLBY)	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	THE POSSESSED
5	KAMASUTRA 2001
6	SPY KIDS
7 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
8 (SDDS)	VALENTINE
9 (DOLBY)	TRAFFIC

Caloocan tel 362.3508

2	THE MUMMY RETURN

Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	PILAK
2	BALIKTARAN
3	THE POSSESSED
4 (SDDS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
5	SPY KIDS
6 (DOLBY)	TRAFFIC
7 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
8	NARINIG MO NA BA ANG LATEST
9	RESERVE

Commonwealth tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	KAMASUTRA 2001
3	BALIKTARAN
4	SPY KIDS
5 (SDDS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
6	VALENTINE
7 (DOLBY)	TRAFFIC
8	PILAK

Ortigas tel 656.6795

1	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	TRAFFIC
3 (DTS)	PILAK
4	SPY KIDS
5 (SDDS)	THE MUMMY RETURN

Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470

1	THE MUMMY RETURN

Sampaguita (Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	THE MUMMY RETURN

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2	THE MUMMY RETURN
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3	THE MUMMY RETURN

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3	PILAK
4	ORAS NA PARA LUMABAN
5	DALAWA SI EBA

New Divisoria Mall CINEMA tel 244.4619

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2	TRAFFIC
3	PILAK
4	ORAS NA PARA LUMABAN
5	DALAWA SI EBA
6	MASARAP UNANG KAGAT

Baclaran LRT CINEMA tel 512.0115

1 (DOLBY)	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	SPY KIDS
3	PILAK
4	
5	

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa Laguna) tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	SUGAR & SPICE
2	15 MINUTES
3 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	15 MINUTES
2 (DTS)	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
3 (DOLBY)	THE MUMMY RETURN
4	THE MUMMY RETURN

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	TRAFFIC
2	DALAWA SI EBA
3	PILAK
4 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
3 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
4	SUGAR & SPICE
5	15 MINUTES

Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	15 MINUTES
3	THE POSSESSED

Olivarez Los Baños tel (049) 536.5101

1	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	15 MINUTES
3	THE POSSESSED

Olivarez Tagaytay tel (046) 413 0311

1	BALIKTARAN
2	EXIT WOUNDS
3	KUNG LILIGAYA KA

Morales Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511 9736

1	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
2	THE MUMMY RETURN
3	PILAK

Cabuyao (Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	THE MUMMY RETURN
2 (DTS)	

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1	THE MUMMY RETURN

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3	SOMEONE LIKE YOU
4	15 MINUTES

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1	THE MUMMY RETURN
2	

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2	PILAK
3	RESERVE
4	THE MUMMY RETURN

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New TV show on the paranormal

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"VERUM Est (Totoo Ba Ito?)" is Channel 2's new show on the paranormal, seen at 5:30 p.m. every Wednesday. When we viewed it last week, we were surprised to see **Tony Velasquez** hosting the program.

Velasquez has made a name for himself as a broadcast news reporter. We recall seeing him reporting on the arrival of some armored units at Malacañang at the height of the standoff between Estrada and Macapagal loyalist, and we admired him for looking and sounding so cool and collected as he competently made his live, unscrip-ted report.

Wednesday last week, we saw him hosting a TV show on the paranormal. It was, frankly, a letdown.

Especially when we saw him dressed in black and walking across a rather spooky set. Velasquez is too good a broadcast journalist to be packaged in this melodramatic manner. Also, won't his reputation for objective reportage be marred by the speculative nature of the new show he's now hosting? Channel 2's staffers really have to get a clearer idea of the difference between news and speculative entertainment—and never the twain should be made to meet.

Anyway: The show's first feature was on that old clinker, *Ang Babae sa Balete Drive*. To rationalize its exhumation of that spooky yarn, the program resorted to several "resource persons."

The first said he believed in the existence of such a ghost dressed in white. Fine, but no corroborating facts were presented.

The second said that the ghost was the victim of an accident. How did he know this? Somebody told him. Oh, okay.

The third said many taxi drivers had reported their encounters with the ghost to him. And one night, he himself had met her. Well, at least he was a direct witness.

The fourth characterized the ghost as a college girl in the 1950s who was scolded by her mother, made *tampo*, drove off in the family car, and died in a crash.

Why did the ghost keep reappearing? Because she had borrowed a valuable object and wanted to return it to its owner. Oh.

(To be continued)

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

COOL DUDES. Icebox band's (from left) Ganni, Ispayk, Kerr, Ro, Willy, Roland and Jun.

Icebox warms up

By Mario Cornejo

AT first glance, you get the impression they wouldn't have been friends in high school. After a while, though, the seven members of Icebox band and their eclectic appearances seem just right for each other, and their differences are blown away by their similarities.

They even have a ready explanation for their camaraderie. "We all went to different schools together."

Maybe you haven't heard of them. After all, they've only been together as Icebox for two years. But the members of the band are all music veterans, some having been professionals for more than 15 years.

Here they all are in one breath: Willy "Red" Gonzales, lead guitar; Ganni Valenzuela, keyboards; Roland Roque, bass; Jun Tutor, drums; Kerr Nuñez, 2nd lead guitar and vocals; Ispayk Cuizon, vocals; and Ro Reyes, vocals.

Vocalists Ispayk and Ro are the most, well, vocal. They seem to carry the frontman role offstage as well as on. Ganni seems to be enjoying himself all the time. Red is mostly quiet but makes his presence felt, and is quick to point out the good qualities of his band. But no matter who's talking, you can feel they see themselves as one unit.

Maybe that's because they play together at least five nights a week, in and out of Metro Manila.

"We're not ashamed to call ourselves a working band," Ro says, and the rest agree. After all, getting work in their business is not as easy as people might think. And a non-working band won't last very long.

The early roots of the Icebox men are in heavy metal and rock, but they gradually made the transition to pop music. "We had to eat," Ganni cracks.

"We have a lot of fun with the music we play," they say. The group has a good following. And, unlike many bands who seem to resent their fans, Icebox takes special care to get their audience involved, establishing a rapport with their listeners.

They don't shy from playing popular songs and taking requests, which make some people slap the much maligned "showband" label on them. Luckily, this group is good enough to defy labels.

Watching them on stage, it becomes apparent that these guys know their stuff. As compared to merely cloning the material, they have mastered the art of taking familiar songs and truly adding something new to them.

The band's obvious skill landed them a record contract, and their first album, "E-Love," was released shortly after their formation. The collection of love songs showcased their songwriting talent. Alas, the market's taste at the time—for double entendre, risqué and sexy songs—pushed their record out of sight.

They have yet to cross over with a breakout hit. But all that may change on Saturday, when the Icebox performs in front of the entire country during the Metropop 2001 competition.

By interpreting the song "Ayoko ng Pakipot," written by Noel Mahinay, the group is actually fulfilling one of its two biggest dreams—to play at the premiere songwriting competition in the Philippines.

The other goal is to play Araneta Coliseum. And the way things are going for them now, that may not be so far behind.

Fate seems to be stepping in for Icebox. A minor miracle had to occur for them to do the song at all. After Mahinay had some difficulties finding an interpreter for "Ayoko ng Pakipot," he saw on TV the band's video for their original song "Edna."

When they perform the song live, it becomes obvious they have adopted Noel's work into their act with a lot of enthusiasm. They say the song is right up their alley, and in fact the style is similar to that of some of their original songs.

Perhaps that's why Red Gonzales and the rest were able to arrange and record the track themselves in a matter of days, just barely beating the deadline, and in fact working through part of Holy Week.

Noel and Icebox are up against stiff competition in the Metropop this year. A true dark horse in a field full of more known talents, there is a Cinderella quality about their story that has people rooting for them.

Having gone through a glum period after their first album failed to do as well as they'd hoped, the Icebox men are now going through a rebirth. Though their experience allows them to project a jaded aura about the whole thing, "they're much more excited than they're letting on," says photojournalist Tina Garcia, who's helping manage the band.

Oh, and the name Icebox just came to them as they struggled to find a good moniker and one of the members sat down on a cooler.

Icebox plays at O2 on M.H. del Pilar in Malate on Mondays and Saturdays, Buzzky in Angeles City on Tuesdays, Fat Tuesday in Alabang on Wednesdays and Sound Stage in Cainta on Fridays

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Unknown aims for stardom

NOEL Mahinay is taking his shot at stardom.

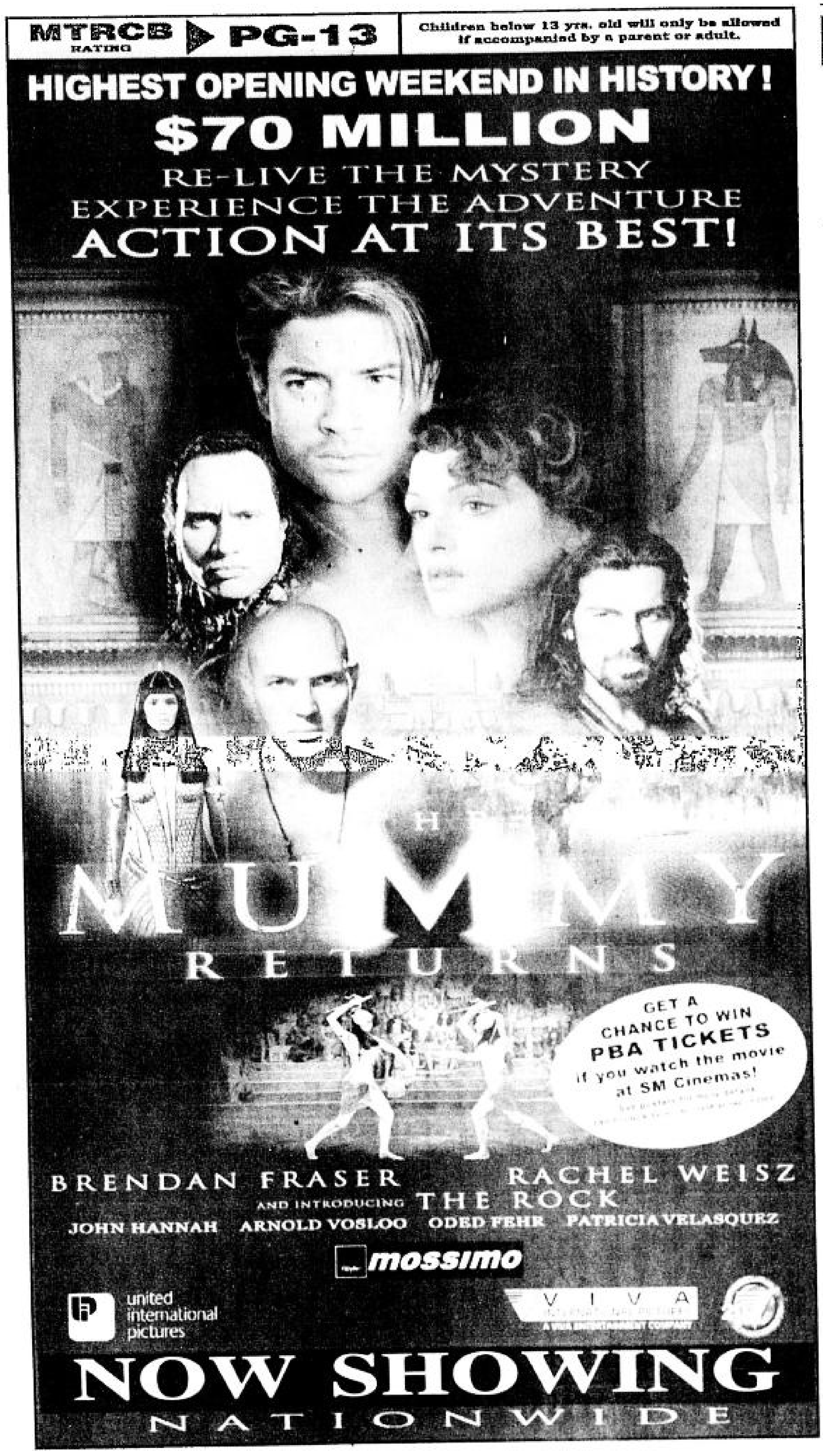
Young and unknown, he is a finalist in the Metropop 2001 songwriting contest, with the skilled but unheralded group Icebox as his interpreters. His song, "Ayoko ng Pakipot," is a catchy cry against that part of human nature that insists on playing games rather than expressing strong feelings.

Based on an actual incident in his life, "Pakipot" has been in storage since 1997 until Noel decided to submit it for competition. Unlike many of the other entries, the "Pakipot" demo was recorded crudely at home, on his regular stereo tape deck. Noel played the guitar and sang the song in one take, no editing, and sent it off to meet up with destiny.

Another entry he submitted to the Metropop in a previous year was not accepted for competition, but was picked up by Rey Valera and recorded on Champagne Morales' album.

Currently unemployed, he has worked as a music teacher and even as a waiter in one of those places where the staff members sing to the patrons.

Though not formally trained in music, Noel has been able to write songs in different styles, adapting to the current trends. He counts this adaptability as one of his biggest strengths. *Mario Cornejo*



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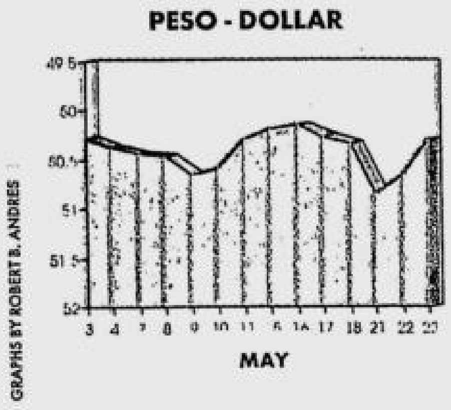

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The US dollar was trading at 121.14 as of 5 p.m., May 23, 2001

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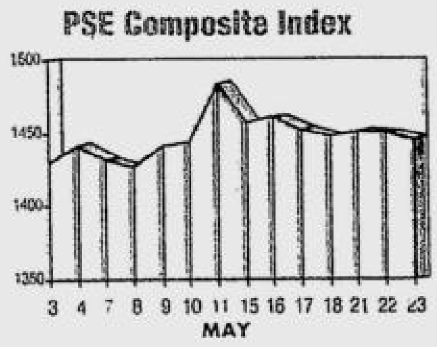
STOCK MARKET

Shares lower



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCKS eased slightly in thin trade yesterday with no significant news to boost interest, traders said.

They added most investors are choosing to remain on the sidelines to see if the government can press ahead and pass the long awaited power sector reform bill at a special session of Congress planned for next week.

Securities 2000 trader Frankie Araneta said he expected the market to drift until the special Congress session convenes.

"If the bill is passed, you may see a small rally but not too long, just two to three days," he said.

The bill is seen as an acid test of the government's ability to press ahead with its economic reform program, regarded as vital to entice foreign investors back into the country.

The main index closed down 5.0 points, or 0.34 percent, at 1,446.20 on miserly turnover of P361.56 million. *Reuters*

Samsung to make RP major production hub

By GIL C. CABACUNGAN JR.

SOUTH Korean electronics giant Samsung Electronic Co. Ltd. is relocating a significant chunk of its production of optical disk drives into the Philippines in line with the global trend to drive down costs.

Samsung Philippines vice president Maeng Dal Bae said Samsung would shift their production of optical disk drives for CD-ROM and DVD-ROM from South Korea and Indonesia to the Philippines.

He said the move should boost the total production value of its Laguna plant to $1 billion within three years making the Philippines one of its top production bases in the world.

Samsung had pumped in P1.9 billion in the Philippines this year for a second factory in its 1.8-hectare Calamba Premier Industrial Park (CPIP) special economic zone. The plant will produce CD re-writeable disk drives.

The project is expected to create 1,141 new jobs and annual export earnings of $709 million. Its output will be shipped to Europe, the US and other Asian countries. This will be put up beside its three-year old, $65-million existing plant which manufactures multi-layer chip capacitors and thick film resistors.

Maeng said Samsung decided to concentrate its optical disk drive production in the region because of the availability of quality labor. The company also believes that the Philippines offered the best site for the company's business activity.

Samsung is the latest in a string of top computer parts makers that are flocking to the Philippines for their regional production hubs.

The Philippines is fast catching up with Singapore as the hard disk drive manufacturing center in the region with NEC Technologies, Hitachi Computer Products Corp., and Toshiba Information Equipment converging in the country over the last few years.

Clark implements top-level revamp

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—Officials of the Clark Development Corp. bared Tuesday a top-level revamp in the state-run body converting the former American-run Clark Air Base in Pampanga and Tarlac into a prime commercial and industrial hub.

CDC Chair Rizalino Navarro and the CDC board announced the appointment Tuesday of four new vice presidents who would assume their posts starting June 1.

Unlike previous efforts to reconstitute the CDC management, this year's revamp in the agency did not meet resistance.

"We knew it would come and we knew it was for the best of the organization," Francis Elum, outgoing CDC vice president for planning and business development, told the INQUIRER.

Hilana Timbol-Roman, executive vice president, said CDC vice chair Rogelio Singson had informed them that "changes would be coming."

Emmanuel Angeles, CDC president and chief operating officer, said Victor Jose Luciano, who is also a CDC director, will replace Roman. Luciano is the son of retired Justice Ines Luciano.

Romeo Dyoco, a former professor of the University of the Philippines-San Fernando extension, will take over the post of Elum, a CDC pioneer.

Elum has served the Bases Conversion Development Authority and the CDC since the government started the conversion efforts in Clark and the former Subic Naval Base in Olongapo City and Zambales in 1992.

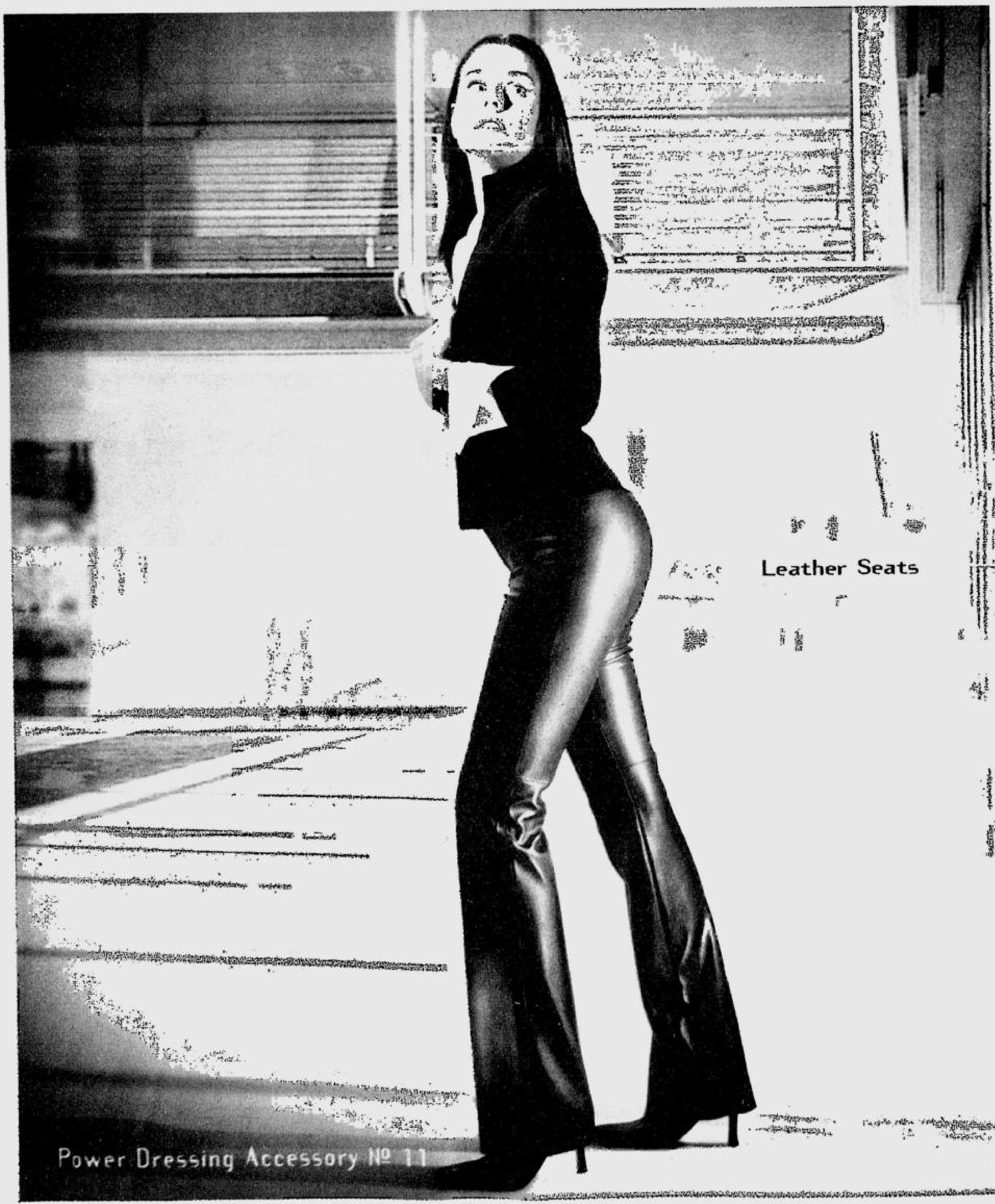
Douglas Yballe and Noel Mananquil were named vice presidents for administration/operation and finance, respectively.

They are replacing Rolando Tongco and Ernesto Gorospe.

Angeles said the board decided to appoint new vice presidents in a meeting last Monday.

"There's nothing personal and political in this move. It is just time to infuse change and put on board a new set of leaders to steer Clark to the economic directions set by the Macapagal administration," he said.

Clark has been dubbed as Luzon's prime employment generator. Since 1993, 288 firms in the ecozone have employed at least 20,944 workers, surpassing the 20,000 jobs generated by the United States 13th Air Force during its 90-year stay here, reports showed. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



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Chairman of the bold

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

TODAY, just let me solve this minor problem, get it out of the way quickly, so then we can all go back to the basketball game. I refer to the plan of this cute administration of Gloriaetta for this current rage called the economy. It is missing. Kidnapped, perhaps.

Actually, it's the bigshots who worry sick about it. More than four months ago, as you know, when Gloriaetta took power from the man named Band ... Wrist Band ... she spoke before the Makati crowd. Meaning, the biggest of big business in this country.

At that time, she already gave them a full view of her ... well, "core beliefs." Only so many days later, just more than a hundred days later, in fact, the Makati crowd, plus the rest of the country, still wonders today what those beliefs will mean to us.

Sure, they are cute beliefs. You can even turn them into dolls or action figures or something. Cuddly as those beliefs still are, maybe we also have to ask this cute administration what it actually wants to do about the faltering economy.

When are we all going to get rich? That's the issue. For that, we must have a plan, because we cannot rely on chance or miracle. And so I'm sure there's a plan somewhere. Only, nobody has seen it. So there, problem solved, what we have is an invisible plan.

* * *

YESTERDAY, for the first time since the Makati crowd helped Gloriaetta send Wrist Band home to Polk Street, and then to Camp Crame, the topman in the Ayala business empire, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, a.k.a. Jaza, sounded off the alarm.

Jaza gave the keynote address in a business conference. He sounded rather frank. For instance, after citing some frightening figures on the population explosion, he said: "We can no longer live in denial of the evils of rapid population growth."

"This is not a comfortable topic to talk about in our country," he said, "but it is hightime we all wake up to the problem." All right! That's my man! Methinks they were rather strong words, particularly coming from a guy like Jaza.

Once he was described to me by an Ayala executive as a "deliberate" man. I can't say if his words were a jab at the CBCP. For sure, they were not meant for Wrist Band, although with his many women, he contributed well to the population growth.

* * *

ANYWAY, you can bet on it, Chavit, that Jaza really means what he says. If he says he would go to jail as long as Wrist Band would go to jail, you don't expect him to say later, "so I lied ... ha, ha!" Or was that Miriam?

Jaza, or for that matter, the Ayala group itself, is known to speak out when it is time to speak out on government policy or the lack of it. They are not the shy type. And I bet my mother's dentures that Jaza's speech was well prepared. All right—deliberate!

Believe me, he was sending a message to this cute administration. Maybe even Jaime Cardinal Sin. I will not be surprised if, after hearing Jaza's speech, the Makati crowd would then deem Gloriaetta's "honeymoon" as finally over.

Pending at this time, as Jaza pointed, are some measures in taxation, privatization, and good governance. To him it's like "fighting fires," and it's not enough. We must become like the banned film "Toro." You know—creative and bold.

* * *

FRANKLY, my beer, I don't know if this administration really has an economic freaking plan. Sure, in the regular press conference of Gloriaetta the other day, she and some Cabinet members, who looked like props, talked about some legislative measures.

Sadly, congressional bills alone do not an economic plan make. By "plan," I refer to concrete steps to raise our economic growth rates. We get them, Jaza said, we have to be both "bold" and "creative." So what do you call him—chairman of the bold?

Anyway, in other words, what is this cute administration going to do to make all of us rich? Meaning, take us out of poverty! The only way, really, is for us to achieve high growth rates. Very, very high growth rates! They do not come about by chance.

Jaza himself noted that today's continuing bad economic trends have been with us since 1997, or since the Asian financial meltdown. Yet nothing so far has been done to reverse them. And all along I thought that's the reason Gloriaetta sent Wrist Band home.

To pass for a plan, we have the old six-year program of Wrist Band, supposedly "updated" by Gloriaetta, meaning, she had something there, too, and that's it! From where I sit, Jaza was calling for something more than just a pirated plan.

* * *

ONE key word in Jaza's speech struck me as something which is awaited by every businessman—whether they are big, medium, or small. And that is, "JUMPSTART." Really, the economy needs a jumpstart. You know—like a kick in the (censored).

Jaza used our lethargic financial markets to drive home the point. For what's happening now is, for one, banks are not lending much, which is bad. For two, capital markets are almost dead. Thus loans are the only source of capital.

With such little capital available, there's not much investments. No investments, no jobs. In fact, Jaza revealed that we have the second highest unemployment in Asia at close to 12 percent. That's why there's this threat of revolution. Oops, "rebellion" *pala*.

To jumpstart investments, Jaza said we have to be innovative and bold. Today, you see, whenever the US Fed says something about interest rates, you can expect an echo from our Bangko Sentral the next day. This, to me, is not bold but bored. Just plain bored.

Ramos group takes over Atlas

By Doris C. Dumlao

ALAKOR Corp. of trader Alfredo Ramos is taking over the Soriano group's Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp.

Atlas, once Asia's biggest copper mine operator, yesterday told the Philippine Stock Exchange that Alakor would be its new white knight following the termination of the P7.1-billion rehabilitation deal with Minoro Mining & Exploration Corp.

In the disclosure, Atlas said it would issue new shares to Alakor equivalent to a 41-percent stake in the company in exchange for the latter's assumption of the mining firm's P1.9 billion worth of obligations to local and foreign banks.

Prior to this deal, stock traders said Ramos, owner of popular bookstore chain National Bookstore, already owned a minority stake in Atlas.

Atlas used to be a favorite target of corporate raiders due to its huge copper potentials. With the 41 percent additional stake, analysts estimated that Ramos would already be able to control the majority of the mining firm.

The copper mining firm was the subject of a much-publicized proxy war among the Coyiuto, Ramos and Soriano groups but it was the latter that ended up controlling the company.

"It's an existing mine. You know that it will make money, except that it needs money to improve its cash flow," Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Roxas said.

The disclosure said Atlas had forged a deal with Alakor as early as Oct. 3 last year, giving the latter the right to rehabilitate the company's copper mine operations in Toledo, Cebu. The mine was closed in 1994 due to mine flooding caused by tropical disturbances and other factors.

A feasibility study on the reopening of the mine had been conducted and that the capital cost to bring the Toledo mine back to commercial production was estimated at $75 million.

Atlas is planning to diversify into non-mining businesses, including fresh construction projects and a possible e-commerce venture in China. It had already signed a preliminary working agreement with China Non-Ferrous Metals Industry's Foreign Engineering and Construction Co (CNFC) in Beijing to obtain additional financing for its rehabilitation.

After its rehabilitation, Atlas plans to list on the Australian Stock Exchange

Cosmos posts 28% growth in sales volume

INCREASED demand due to a warmer temperature and the recent elections fever led to a 28-percent growth in the sales volume of soft drinks manufacturer Cosmos Bottling Corp. in the first three months of the year.

Cosmos chief executive officer Jose A. Concepcion III said the company surpassed in the first quarter this year the 26-percent volume growth for the whole of last year.

"As in the past five years, the company continued to outperform the relatively flat industry growth," Concepcion said.

With minimal price adjustments last February, net sales reached P1.5 billion for the quarter, or 38 percent more than the level in the same period last year. Net income also grew 44 percent to P210 million in the first quarter.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization jumped 39 percent year on year indicating an improved cash flow position.

"We see the momentum accelerating even more this year as we trend toward our full year target of P1.1 billion in net income after tax and around P2.4 billion in cash earnings." Concepcion added.

Concepcion credited his strong management team led by president and COO Antonio T. Panajon for pushing the growth while managing margins effectively despite the increased costs in raw materials, particularly sugar.

Concepcion likewise attributed the continued growth to the success of the company's recent marketing campaigns for Pop Cola that highlighted Filipino characteristics, and to its wider distribution network.

Belle seeks debt reprieve

LEISURE estate and gaming firm Belle Corp. is seeking a three-month moratorium on the servicing of its debts worth P6.3 billion while bracing for a possible delay of a multibillion-peso rehabilitation deal with the group of retail tycoon Henry Sy.

Company officials yesterday said the proposed debt relief would pave the way for the restructuring of the foreign component of its obligations and thus, give Belle some breathing space in case the difficult economic conditions delay the deal with Sy.

"Hopefully, things will turn positive when the final results of the elections are out. But with the (peso) continuing to depreciate, we are not sure whether we will be able to implement our spin-off plan by the third quarter," Belle Corp. CFO Manuel Gana said in an interview.

The rehabilitation plan entails the spin-off of over 600 hectares of Belle's prime property holdings (consisting of subdivision lots and unsold condominium units in Tagaytay Highlands International Golf Club Inc in Tagaytay City and Tagaytay Midlands Golf Club Inc. in Batangas) into a new subsidiary called Highlands Prime Leisure Properties Inc. A consortium led by Sy, which already owns 25 percent of Belle, is set to take over the company

Gana explained that the primary purpose of the arrangement being sought from all creditors was not really to save on debt servicing expenses but to put the company in a better cash flow position.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Wednesday, May 23, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	76.5	77	76	76	353,400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	42.5	42.5	41.5	41.5	60,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	211	213	210	213	87,100
Philippine National Bank	55	55	52.5	52.5	88,400
Phil. Savings Bank	29	29.5	29	29.5	600
Rizal Comm'l Bkg Corp. A	26	26	26	26	3,000
Security Bank Corp.	20.75	20.75	20.75	20.75	200
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	100
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	20,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	250,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	227	248	227	248	1,140
Manulife Financial Corp.	1295	1295	1290	1295	5,100
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1125	1125	1110	1115	5,260
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	41	41	41	41	26,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	130,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	685	685	685	685	4,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.045	0.047	0.045	0.047	5,100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	20,000
Piltel	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	490,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	715	720	715	715	5,930
Ivantage Corp.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	10,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.047	0.047	0.046	0.047	100,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	41.5	41.5	41.5	41.5	8,800
Manila Electric Co. B	56.5	56.5	56	56	220,200
Petron Corp.	1.86	1.86	1.84	1.86	2,213,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.88	0.9	0.88	0.9	40,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	25,455,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.84	1.96	1.8	1.92	26,796,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	1.12	1.16	1.12	1.16	2,013,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.12	2.14	2.12	2.14	125,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.9	265,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.5	13.5	13.25	13.25	243,300
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	27.5	28	27	28	333,700
Pancake House Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	10,000
RFM Corp.	1	1	1	1	350,000
San Miguel Corp. A	46.5	46.5	46.5	46.5	22,100
San Miguel Corp. B	49.5	49.5	49	49.5	117,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	160,000
Ayala Corp.	7.5	7.5	7.2	7.4	3,072,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.44	678,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.25	12.25	1,800
A. Soriano Corp.	0.34	0.38	0.34	0.38	620,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	20,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	12.5	10	12.5	200
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.38	1.4	1.38	1.38	1,424,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	40,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	300,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	5,600,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.045	0.045	0.042	0.042	500,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	10,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	291,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.5	249,500
Global Equities Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.23	550,000
Guoco Holdings (Phils.)	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	50,000
Ionics Inc.	12	12.5	12	12.5	38,100
Ipeople Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	40,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.68	1.8	165,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	700,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	790,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	1,090,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	900,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	2,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	350,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	50,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0 25	0 26	0 25	0.26	960,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Corp.	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.7	75,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	30,000
SPI Technologies Inc	14 5	14.5	14.5	14.5	11,800
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.45	130,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0 47	0.47	0 47	0.47	30,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	41	41	41	41	1,175,900
DMCI Holdings Inc-Pref.	510	510	510	510	2,100
Equitable PCI Bank-War	3	3	3	3	20,000
Globe Telecom Hldg (Pdr)	695	695	695	695	1,300
Macroasia Corp. Warrants	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.3	1,750,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.003	0.0034	0.003	0.0032	408,000,000
PBCom-Warrants	10	10	10	10	1,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series L	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	2,500
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.038	0 038	0.036	0.037	75,400,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.5	6,123,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	250,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	4,250,000
Filinvest Land Inc	2.18	2.2	2.18	2.18	2,433,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	10,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	110,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.8	4,204,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.095	0 095	0.095	0.095	100,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	11,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	3,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	1,040,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	6,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	8,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	2,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.21	480,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.23	0.23	0.22	0.22	170,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0042.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	8,000,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	20,000
Vulcan Ind'l.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	100,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	875,200	65,596,150.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	670,233,630	227,905,085.00
PRO	17,680,000	69,137,680.00
Mining	28,693,000	517,600.00
OIL	9,120,000	58,800.00
GRAND TOTALS:	726,601,830	363,215,315.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	808.42	DOWN 4.47
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,978.20	DOWN 4.39
PRO	563.32	DOWN 0.68
Mining	1,224.08	DOWN 14.54
OIL	1.45	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	787.10	DOWN 14.17
Composite	1,446.20	DOWN 5.00

NO. OF ADVANCES: 25; NO. OF DECLINES: 38; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 42;
NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 105; NO. OF TRADES: 2,009

CURRENCIES

May 23, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.155535	1.000000	50.7890
Japan	Yen	0.009419	0.008151	0.4140
United Kingdom	Pound	1.650104	1.428000	72.5267
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.148149	0.128208	6.5116
Switzerland	Franc	0.653842	0.565835	28.7382
Canada	Dollar	0.750250	0.649266	32.9756
Singapore	Dollar	0.638594	0.552639	28.0680
Australia	Dollar	0.604107	0.522794	26.5522
Bahrain	Dinar	3.065243	2.652661	134.7260
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.308135	0.266660	13.5434
Brunei	Dollar	0.636763	0.551055	27.9875
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000102	0.000088	0.0045
Thailand	Baht	0.025351	0.021939	1.1143
UAE	Dirham	0.314645	0.272294	13.8295
Korea	Won	0.000892	0.000772	0.0392
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.865400	43.9528
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.442472	22.4727
France	Franc	0.152450	0.131929	6.7005
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.392701	19.9449
Austria	Schilling	0.072673	0.062891	3.1942
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.021453	1.0896
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000447	0.0227
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.145550	7.3923
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004317	0.2193
Spain	Peseta	0.006010	0.005201	0.2642
Luxembourg	Franc	0.024790	0.021453	1.0896
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.098831	55.8085

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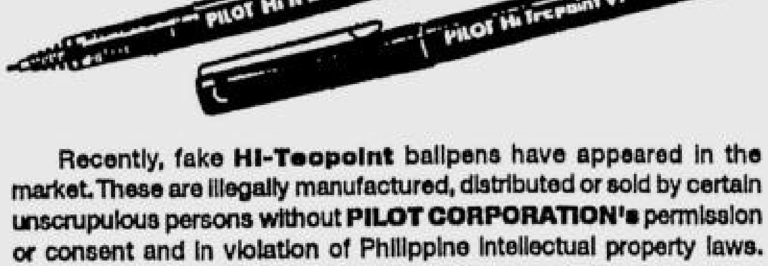

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Assemblers seek higher tariffs on imported bikes

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

LOCAL motorcycle assemblers have asked the government to raise tariffs on imports and crack down harder on smuggling.

Suzuki Philippines Inc. president and general manager Kiyoshi Kawahara said prevailing tariffs were not high enough to discourage the sale of imported brands.

Completely knocked-down motorcycles are currently charged a 3-percent duty while completely built up units are levied 20 percent.

Kawahara said the government should jack up the 17-percent tariff differential to give assemblers a price advantage versus imports.

Kawahara said much bigger markets in the region, such as Thailand and Indonesia, have a wider gap between imports and locally assembled units to protect their domestic industries.

Thailand and Indonesia have annual sales of at least a million units each compared to the 200,000 units sold in the Philippines, excluding units smuggled into the country.

Kawahara said the industry was also pushing for a review of the Motorcycle Development Program with an eye on curbing smuggling of motorcycle imports.

Suzuki remains upbeat on the local market, especially for four- and two-stroke motorcycles as it moves to selling more to solo buyers instead of tricycle operators.

Suzuki yesterday unveiled its latest Shogun FD110 models largely to penetrate the fast-growing young riders segment.

Suzuki is aiming to boost its market share from 15 to 25 percent this year. The company is currently ranked No. 4 in industry sales behind Honda, Yamaha and Kawasaki.

Gov't to raise $500M through private placements, not bonds

NATIONAL Treasurer Sergio Edeza Jr. said yesterday the government would raise some $500 million through private placements, not bonds.

Edeza said the bond issue would depend on whether financial markets would be receptive to a Philippine offering at this stage as opposed to favorable rates being proposed now by three foreign investment banks.

"We are trying to close two deals within this week worth $250 million. It would be two separate private placements with a maturity of three years," Edeza said.

On top of this, the government, according to Edeza, was also working out a third borrowing that was neither a bond nor a private placement worth $250 million in July.

Edeza said the rates offered by the investment banks were comparable to the two recent borrowings of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. The central bank was able to raise $940 million in March and April for a spread of between 2.9 and 3.1 percentage points over the London interbank offered rate.

Sources said the investment banks to handle the three deals would be JP Morgan Chase, Credit Suisse First Boston and HSBC Corp.

Clarissa S. Batino

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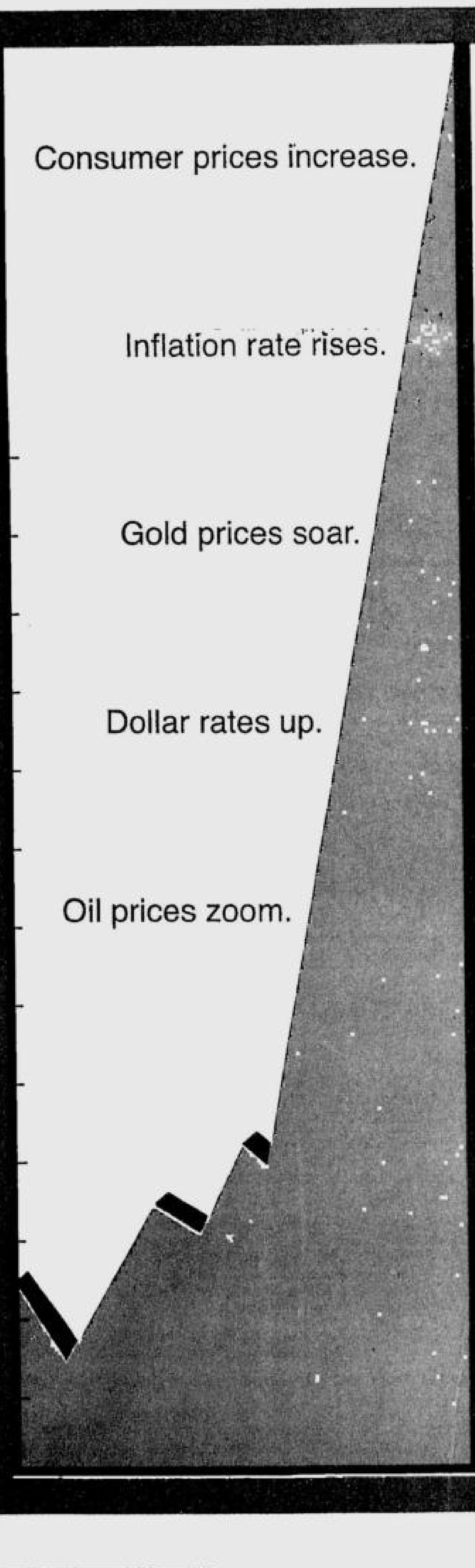
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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late MANUEL F. LINDA has been extrajudicially settled among his heirs as per Doc. 148 Page. 30 Book LXXXVIII Series of 1998 before Notary Public Atty. Gregorio F. Ariola Jr. of Cainta Rizal.
(PDI- May 10, 17, & 24 2001)

PERSONAL

Make 3 Wishes 1 Business 2 Impossible Pray 9 Hail Mary's for 9 days on the 9th day put out this ad & your wishes will come true. Thank you Holy Spirit OLC

THANK YOU HOLY SPIRIT
From Oda and Family

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Quezon City

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting sealed tenders on **31 May 2001 at 1:00 PM** at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila**, among NFA accredited government corporations/ institutions and Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) accredited international traders/suppliers for the supply of minimum 10,000 MT up to maximum of 54,087 MT raw cane or white cane refined sugar (fines) of any specific origin representing the Philippines' minimum access volume (MAV) allocation for the year 2001 under the following terms:

1. **SPECIFICATIONS**
   - A. **Raw Cane Sugar (VHP)** - Of fair average quality of the current crop in bulk with **Very High Polarization (VHP)** minimum of 98.50 degrees, maximum of 99.40 degrees at the time of shipment and inspection at the loadport;
   - B. **White Cane Refined Sugar (Fines)** - Minimum polarization of 99.80 degrees, maximum color 45 ICUMSA units and maximum moisture content of 0.06%;
2. **ARRIVAL PERIOD**

	NOT LATER THAN	
VARIETY	JULY	AUGUST
A. Raw Cane Sugar	10,000 MT min. 54,087 MT max	10,000 MT min. 54,087 MT max.
B. White Cane Refined	10,000 MT min. 54,087 MT max.	10,000 MT min. 54,087 MT max.

3. **PRICE OFFER**

Interested offerors are required to submit price offers for both raw and white cane refined sugar as per arrival schedule from any specific origin and to be quoted in US$/MT, CFR, FO, based on the following modes of payment:

1. **Irrevocable at sight Letter of Credit**
2. **Irrevocable usance Letter of Credit, 180 days after B/L date**

SRA accredited international traders/suppliers are required to submit a bid bond equivalent 10% of the total offered price in the form of Cashier's check; Manager's check, demand draft in USD issued/drawn from a reputable Metro Manila bank or an irrevocable Standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable bank domiciled in the Philippines valid for 120 days from date of bidding. On the other hand, NFA accredited government corporations/institutions are exempted from the posting of bid bond.

Submission of the offer together with the bid bond will be between 12:00 noon to 1:00 PM on the tender date.

Opening of offers will start exactly at 1:00 PM. Only those approved and invited by the Bidding Committee for the supply of raw/refined sugar based on the list of NFA accredited government corporations and international traders/ suppliers accredited by the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) are invited to submit sealed tenders.

The pre-bidding conference will be held on **28 May 2001** at 10:00 AM at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Interested bidders may secure the terms and conditions starting 24 May 2001 (8:00 A.M. - 6:00 PM) from the Directorate for Marketing Operations, Foreign Operations Division, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City with telephone numbers 743-8696; 712-1928; 712-1572, 712-1564 and 711-7433.

Bidding documents will be available on **28 May 2001** right after the pre-bidding conference to qualified bidders/offerors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00.

In case of failure a pre-rebidding/rebidding will be conducted on **04 June 2001 and 07 June 2001**, at 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM, respectively, at the **FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila**.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid which is deemed most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **VICENTE V. RACHO**
Chairman, PBAC and
Assistant Administrator

(PDI--May 24, 25 & 26, 2001)

National Power Corporation
Generation Company 1
161 Bonifacio Drive Port Area, Manila 1018

GENCO-1

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The NPC GENCO-1 Regional Contracts Committee (RCC) is inviting contractors to Prequalify and to Bid for the following:

PROJECT CODE AND TITLE	SCOPE OF WORKS, TRACK RECORDS & LICENSE/ CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENT
1 SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS, EQUIPMENT AND SUPERVISION OF JOBS RELATED TO JANITORIAL AND SANITATION & OTHER RELATED UTILITY SERVICES FOR BATAAN THERMAL POWER PLANT (2PQ0800RCC-006)	The services to be performed by the Applicant shall cover all requirements for the proper upkeep, cleanliness, and sanitation of buildings & grounds. Applicant shall have at least 1-year exp. similar to the requirement and with valid DTI/SEC Certificate.
2. SUPPLY OF LABOR, MATERIALS/SUPPLIES, TOOLS/ EQUIPMENT & SUPERVISION FOR JOBS RELATED TO JANITORIAL, SANITATION & OTHER RELATED UTILITY SERVICES FOR BATANGAS COAL-FIRED THERMAL POWER PLANT (PQ1000RCC-017)	The services to be performed by the Applicant shall cover all requirements for the proper upkeep, cleanliness, and sanitation of buildings & grounds. Applicant shall have at least 1-year exp. similar to the requirement and with valid DTI/SEC Certificate.

Application for pre-qualification is open to all Filipino Contracting Firms with valid license and/or business permit mentioned above. Prospective bidders must be able to prove his Experience, Equipment capability as well as his Financial capacity to perform the services called for.

Pre-qualification Forms shall be available for issuance starting May 24, to June 6, 2001 at the NPC GENCO-1 Contracts Management Office (CMO), 3rd Floor NPC GENCO-1 Building, 161 Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila, upon presentation of original copy of the applicant's valid business license and/or certificate mentioned above, together with the Letter of Intent and payment of a non-refundable fee of (per copy):

Item no. 1 - Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00)
Item no. 2 - One Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00)

For purposes of pre-qualification and bidding activities, the following schedules will be observed:

	JANITORIAL	
ACTIVITIES	BTPP	BCFTPP
Submission of Prequa. Docs.	June 20, 2001	June 20, 2001
Issuance of Bid Documents	July 23, 2001	July 27, 2001
Pre-bid Conference	July 30, 2001	Aug. 3, 2001
Submission/Opening of Bids	Aug. 10, 2001	Aug. 15, 2001

The NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason; waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the Corporation. The NPC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **LORNA T. DY**
Officer-In-Charge, RAFS
And Chairman, RCC

(PDI--May 24, 28 & 31, 2001)

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Gov't gave PNB for a song; cronies blamed

By Elena R. Torrijos

(Second of a series)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE GOVERNMENT blew its chance to make as much as P10 billion from the sale of its stake in Philippine National Bank last year.

A former government official privy to what transpired blamed it on cronyism. He recounted that the Estrada administration gave away the chance to earn P10 billion when it ceded control to beer and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan and allowed the dilution of the government's stake to 16 percent last year. He said former President Joseph Estrada, early in his office, informed then Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu that he wanted to sell PNB to Tan, one of his largest campaign contributors.

The government understood that the bank needed to raise additional capital because some P8 billion in loan loss provisions, charged in 1998, had reduced its capital base to P14 billion from P22 billion, violating the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' 10-percent capital adequacy ratio requirement. To help the bank, the government allowed the rights offering that diluted its 45.6-percent stake in PNB to 30 percent, a level that had to be maintained until after March 2000 because of PNB's loan covenants.

The Department of Finance, however, wanted a price of P145 a share for the government's remaining 30 percent, or P9 billion to P10 billion, through a public bidding in the second quarter of last year despite Estrada's instructions. At that time, PNB shares had fallen to as low as P25 per share.

Under the September 1999 rights offering, PNB issued 68.74 million new common shares equivalent to half of its 137.48 million common shares then outstanding. Existing shareholders were allowed to exercise their rights and buy the new shares at P137.80 per share. The finance department then moved to get in a situation where the government would retain control over PNB even if it waived its right to subscribe to the stock offering, the source said.

The deed

The government had no money at that time to subscribe to 31.335 million PNB shares, but it assigned its rights to the PNB Retirement Fund Inc. under a deed of assignment executed on Sept. 9, 1999 and signed by Espiritu and fund president Juliana Dimalanta. For the assignment of the 15-percent PNB stake, the pension fund paid the national government P43 million.

A ranking central bank official confirmed that the PNB Retirement Fund made certain arrangements wherein Tan, through three special-purpose vehicles, managed to buy 75 percent of the fund's assigned shares, or 10.59 percent of PNB, at P140 a share, plus interest, or P160. The fund used Witter Weber & Schwab Investments Inc., Integrion Investments Inc. and Dreyfuss Investments Inc. to assign its shares to Tan, but it retained a 3.53-percent stake through RF Investments.

The source explained that in the contract with the PNB Retirement Fund, voting rights must always remain with the government until June 2000 or after the planned privatization.

"The idea at that time is to really see to it that the government is in complete control not only of management but of the board up to June 2000. That was the basis for the assignment," the source explained.

By the wording of the deed of assignment, however, the PNB Retirement Fund or its agents "commits to vote together" with the government until June 30, 2000, and this did not necessarily mean that voting rights stayed with the government.

The source said even with the assigned shares, Tan seemed to have only had a 19-percent stake in PNB. However, the BSP official said Tan had a 30-percent stake acquired through the market before the 1999 stock rights offering, from which the bank was able to raise over P9 billion.

In October 1999, however, Estrada asked for the courtesy resignations of PNB directors, supposedly in line with all the courtesy resignations he was asking his Cabinet members in preparation for a revamp. It turned out that PNB was the only government-controlled corporation from which Estrada asked for and received courtesy resignations. These courtesy resignations laid the groundwork for Tan to take over the bank.

Board games

It is of public record that tobacco magnate Lucio Tan's group officially surfaced at the PNB board level on Dec. 8, 1999. Tan and three others—Enrique Filamor, Feliciano Miranda Jr. and Macario Te—had themselves elected to the board.

Filamor, a longtime colleague of BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura in their Citibank days, was managing director of the BFE (Buenaventura Filamor Echauz) consultancy firm before joining PNB. Miranda, who was also said to be the government's nominee, used to head the central bank's supervision and examination department. Te, a former director of Traders Royal Bank, was a close business associate of Tan and sat in the boards of other Tan-controlled companies.

The private shareholders supposedly nominated Washington Sycip, chair of Tan's airline services company, MacroAsia Corp., while the government solely nominated former Labor Secretary Nieves Confesor.

Edward Matti, lawyer Alfonso Reyno Jr., Santiago Cua, Valentin Daez and Domingo Santiago, mostly allies of Espiritu, were replaced. Cua, however, remained as principal operating officer of the bank.

The PNB board entry of Tan's group, with effectively five board directors counting Miranda and Sycip, preceded by a month Espiritu's resignation as finance secretary in early January 2000.

Tan's control of PNB was in hand soon after his nominee, Miranda, replaced Espiritu protégé Benjamin Palma-Gil as president and chief executive later that month. That preceded shortly Gregorio Santayana's resignation from the board to join the board of PAL. Up until Santayana's resignation, six of the government's nominees were still on the board, but afterward it became 5-5 between the existing directors and the new ones with control of the bank tipped in favor of Tan by virtue of Miranda's management of the bank.

Speculation was rife as to why Tan wanted PNB. Some said Tan was interested in gaining control of PNB because the bank was a very big creditor of Philippine Airlines Inc., and the tycoon's crown jewels—Asia Brewery Inc. and Fortune Tobacco—were mortgaged to the bank to secure PAL's loans. There was also talk that Tan wanted to merge Allied Banking Corp. and PNB to create the country's largest bank. Of course, it was believed that Tan certainly had the clout to get what he wanted because of his close relationship with Estrada.

The source said in October, around the time Estrada asked for the courtesy resignations of PNB's directors, Tan already informed finance officials of his decision not to buy the government's remaining PNB stake. Tan instead insisted that PNB and Allied Bank, which the businessman controlled, be merged. This, the source said, indicated that Tan had no intention of forking out funds for the government's stake and wanted to get the bank for free, if possible.

High stakes

On Feb. 2, 2000, in an initial statement of beneficial ownership of securities filed with the Securities Exchange Commission, Tan claimed that on Dec. 8 he had 10 direct shares of PNB and proxies of the bank amounting to approximately 46 percent. Tan was also quoted in the newspapers as saying that he had such substantial holdings.

That statement, however, directly contradicted records of PNB, copies of which were obtained by the INQUIRER. In a letter to BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes dated Feb. 29, 2000, PNB corporate secretary Roderick Salazar III reported that Tan's stockholdings in PNB consisted of 10 shares directly in his name and the 10.59-percent stake equivalent to 21.894 million shares.

Salazar pointed out that the 10.59 percent was through Witter Weber & Schwab Investments Inc., Integrion Investments Inc. and Dreyfuss Investments Inc. which gave respective proxies amounting to a 3.53-percent stake in PNB, to Tan's Mabuhay Equities Corp., Grande Holdings Corp. and Starline Corp., respectively.

Salazar based his report on a letter of Tan's representatives received Feb. 14, 2000.

The PNB corporate secretary said he had also received sworn certifications of Mandarin Securities Corp., Wealth Securities Inc. and Luys Securities Co. Inc. regarding their authority to vote all the PNB shares that they held in favor of Tan, Filamor and Te.

"These brokers, however, stress that they have not given any proxies to Messrs. Tan, Filamor and Te on the shares in PNB which the brokers control and that the voting power over these shares continues to be held by them. According to them, it is their preference that they simply be represented in the PNB board by the three directors mentioned," Salazar disclosed.

"Insofar as the discrepancies in the report submitted to the SEC are concerned as well as the newspaper reports you referred to in your earlier correspondence which show that Mr. Tan has supposedly 46 percent shareholdings by proxy, as you know, we have already requested Mr. Tan to explain such fact but we have yet to receive his clarification on the matter," the PNB corporate secretary said.

Based on what the PNB corporate secretary stated and other records, Tan only controlled a 10.59-percent stake in PNB even disregarding the question of whether the voting rights of this stake, through the deed of assignment signed by the PNB Retirement Fund, remained with the government. If one were to add the 0.050-percent stake of Mariano Tanenglian, the tycoon's brother, and to throw in the combined 10-percent stake in the bank held by brokerage houses Wealth, Mandarin and Luys, Tan controlled only about 20 percent of the bank.

Therefore, Tan's 20-percent stake, which by a large stretch covered three board representatives, did not constitute "control." The government, which had a 30-percent stake and on its side foreign shareholders that held roughly a 20-percent stake, was still capable of dominating the board.

Hard sell

Following Espiritu's resignation, Estrada tapped then Trade Secretary Jose Pardo to take over the helm of the finance department. Under pressure from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which were seeking the immediate full privatization of PNB as part of a loan requirement, Pardo soon started making preparations for the sale of the government's 30-percent stake in PNB.

Based on news reports in February 2000, Pardo was quoted as saying that Tan's entry into PNB could not be considered a form of "cronyism" since the government did not show any favoritism to the businessman who bought PNB shares in the open market.

At the same time, Buenaventura was criticizing the 1999 PNB stock rights offering that allowed Tan to acquire close to half of PNB. He branded the issuance as a "strategic mistake" and noted that Tan's presence in PNB could block other investors from participating in the bidding of the government's PNB share.

The former government official said he could not understand why Buenaventura and Pardo agreed or did not question the transfer of control to Tan of the board and the presidency of the bank given the PNB records showing that Tan had control of only a 10.59-percent stake and 10 shares in the bank.

In the second quarter of last year, Pardo announced that the government and Tan agreed to sell their combined holdings of nearly 80 percent of PNB. Finance Undersecretary Cornelio Gizon said that the agreement required that the shares of the government and Tan would be put in escrow. He said that Tan represented he had 46 percent and would have had to deliver these shares.

In an interview, in response to why the BSP did not question Tan's control when records showed that the businessman had far less than a 46-percent stake in PNB, Buenaventura said: "As far as we were concerned it was a joint-sale agreement between the Department of Finance and Lucio Tan. It was their responsibility to insure that they could deliver whatever percentage ownership or that they could deliver the amount of shares they were supposed to be selling. And as far as we know and believed, we accepted the representations because they had to deliver what they were representing to sell."

To be continued)

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AUGUSTO "Totoy" PAHN QUIRINO

*Died in the peace of the Lord on May 22, 2001
at the age of 69.*

His children **Joey**, **Tina**, **Louie**, **Gina**, **Anna** and **Michael Miranda**, **Lisa** and **Jerry Pratt**; and their mother **Babsy Paredes**; his brother and sister-in-law **Badong** and **Lily Quirino**; niece **Tammy**; and the rest of the **Pahn**, **Quirino** and **Paredes** families, request the reader to say a prayer for the repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the mortuary of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine, Doña Juana Rodriguez Avenue, New Manila, Quezon City. There will be a Mass at 8:00 o'clock every evening of the wake.

His body will be cremated on Saturday, May 26 at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at La Funeraria Paz on Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Please omit flowers.

Message of Thanks

Our Lord lovingly carried with Him to Eternal Glory
on Easter Sunday, April 15, 2001

DR. LEOPOLDO "POL" S. UICHANCO III

Our family is deeply grateful for the love and concern so manifested in your support, prayers and presence in his earthly life and in his glorious death.

We praise God for blessing us with relatives and friends, who shared with us the happy times and the sad times, the times of having and the times of loss.

Maribel and children **Malen**, **Mika** and **Erika**, request you all, once again, to join them on the 40th day Holy Eucharistic Celebration on Friday, May 25, 2001 at 7:30 PM at the PERGOLA, Phase II, Ayala Heights Village, Balara, Quezon City.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

Angelina Comsti Asuncion

*who passed away in the grace of our Lord
on April 15, 2001*

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

In commemoration of her 40th day of death, a Holy Mass will be held today at 6:00 a.m. at the Immaculate Conception Parish, Pasig City.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Col. CESAR ABCEDE LAGAYA (PAF Ret.)

*who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on May 8, 2001*

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation
to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and
messages of sympathy, and who in countless ways,
condoled with and comforted us
in our hour of bereavement.

AGUEDO "AGUI" R. REYES

February 5, 1926 - May 10, 2001

A man with a big heart and loved by all, **Agui** passed on to the blissful life with our Heavenly Father on May 10, 2001, in Los Angeles, California.

His sisters **Cesarea Tuparan**, **Ruperta**, **Leonora**, and **Nita Reyes**; brothers **Jose** (†) and **Romualdo** (†); sister-in-law **Natividad**; and his nephews, niece and grandchildren request the reader to please offer a prayer for Agui.

His remains will be interred on May 26, 2001 at the St. Michael Ossuarium of the Parish of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Daily Mirror Street, West Triangle, Quezon City after the Requiem Mass.

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"...absent with the body to be present with the Lord."
Matthew 10:39

FELICITAS BANDAYREL SALES

of Bangued, Abra

*Died in the grace of our Lord in Clifton, New Jers
on May [illegible] 2001, at the age [illegible]*

She is survived by her husband Virgilio, and children Stella and Stephen, Jennifer and Junjun, and Glenda

Her body will arrive in Manila on Friday, May 25, 2001 and will be brought to the Funeraria Nacional on Araneta Avenue Quezon City

Interment will be on Tuesday, May 29, 2001 at Himlayang Pilipino in Tandang Sora, Quezon City

---

Our Dearly Beloved

HERMINIO CATINDIG CRUZ

of Juan Luna, Gagalangin, Tondo

*Joined his beloved wife
Milagros Alday Cruz
and his Lord Creator on 22 May 2001.*

They are survived by their children **Robert James**, **Ronald Albert** and **Maria Lourdes Herrera**, **Jaime Carlos**, and **Joel Edgardo**; their grandchildren **Paul Jason**, **Owen Albert**, **Lucas Francis**, and **Heleina Marie**; his brothers **Rene** and **Ben**; sister **Geling**, and **Cruz in-laws**, sister-in-law **Virginia R. Moreno**; and brother-in-law **Jose R. Moreno**.

His remains lie in state in Malate Catholic Church, Remedios Street, Malate, Manila.

Interment will be on Friday, 25 May 2001 in Manila Memorial Park in Sucat, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass at Malate Catholic Church.

IN LOVING MEMORY
ON THE
TWENTIETH DEATH ANNIVERSARY
OF

NENA K. LIM

May 24, 1981

Friends and relatives are invited to join Memorial Masses being celebrated in the following churches:

St. Alphonsus de Liguori Church, Magallanes Village, Makati City	7:00 a.m.
St. John Bosco Church, Arnaiz Street, Makati City	12:15 p.m.
Capitol Parish Church, Escario Street, Cebu City	12:15 p.m.
Mary the Queen Parish Church, Greenhills, San Juan	6:00 p.m.
Christ the King Church, Green Meadows, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Church, Scout Ybardolaza, Quezon City	6:00 p.m.
St. Therese Church, Lahug, Cebu City	6:00 p.m.
St. Mark's Church, Jermantown, Virginia, U.S.A.	
Holy Spirit Church, Fremont, California, U.S.A.	

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
John 14:6

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting sealed Sale Through Market Determined Pricing (SMDP) at Food Development Center, FTI Compound, Taguig, Metro Manila among all interested buyers for the sale of local and imported refined sugar, particulars as follows:

WITHDRAWAL PERIOD : VOLUME (in Lkg.)
JUNE : 250,000 Lkg.
JULY : 500,000 Lkg.
AUGUST : 500,000 Lkg.
SEPTEMBER : 250,000 Lkg.

COLOR (ICUMSA Units) max : 45 (imported) 100 (Local)
INDICATIVE PRICE : P1,150.00 per Lkg.
BID BOND : 5% of the total price offer
PERFORMANCE BOND : 10% of the bid price in the form cash, manager's/cashier's check or thru irrevocable Letter of Credit

PRE-AUCTION DATES/TIME : 28 May 2001 (June 4, 2001 in case of failre or for any balance of the first auction) 2:00 PM

AUCTION DATES : 30 May 2001 (6 June 2001 in case of failure or for any balance of the first auction) 2:00 PM

Bid documents will be available on 28 May 2001 after the Pre-SMDP conference and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P2,000.00. Interested bidders may secure terms and conditions starting May 25, 2001 from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at Directorate for Marketing Operations (Operations and Coordinations Division), 5th Floor, Matimyas Building, E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City or may contact at telephone no. 712-1572.

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all, waive any informality thereof and accept only such bids as are advantageous to the agency.

(Sgd.) **VICENTE V. RACHO**
Chairman, PBAC and
Assistant Administrator

(PDI--May 24, 25 & 26, 2001)

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Congratulations to the **NEW LICENSED CIVIL ENGINEERS** who have passed the Examination, which was given by the PRC last **May 10-11, 2001**, are the following:

1. **Joel M. Agudong**
2. **Romani S. Andress**
3. **Joseph A. Bantanilla**
4. **Rodel T. Marquez**
5. **Richard A. Marquez**
6. **Erwin L. Pinion**
7. **Lynneth V. Salcedo**

People, Events & Products
ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor

Soroptimist head to speak at confab

ZIMMERMAN

DR. Jane Zimmerman, president of Soroptimist International, is arriving in Manila to attend the 18th Mid-Biennial Conference of the Soroptimist International of the Philippines Region. She is the keynote speaker at the opening ceremonies of the conference which will be held at the Development Academy of the Philippines in Tagaytay City. Her topic is on trafficking, which has become a worldwide issue.

Soroptimist International is the largest and most proactive worldwide organization of women in management and the professions dedicated to community service and is a leading proponent of human rights and the advancement of the status of women.

MIP raffle reset

THE "GOLDEN RAFFLE" draw slated for Sunday, May 27 has been rescheduled to Saturday, Sept. 8, at the Mary Immaculate Parish at Apollo III, Moonwalk Village, Talon V, Las Piñas City at the same time. Proceeds of the Golden Raffle, a joint fund-raising project of the Knights of Columbus Las Piñas Council 7618 and other parish organizations, shall finance the construction of the Mary Immaculate Parish Hall.

CCFI ANNUAL MEETING
Former DOTC Secretary Josefina T. Lichauco (second from left) was guest of honor and speaker during the 51st Annual Membership Meeting of the Community Chest Foundation, Inc. held recently at the CCFI headquarters in Manila. She addressed the affair on the theme "Solidarity for Progress." Shown in photo are (from left) Rizalina S. Bonifacio Vera, first VP and vice chair; Josefina Lichauco; Bob C. Mirani, CCF president and chair of the board; and Rosario R. Villar, treasurer. The affair was capped by the election of CCFI board of trustees for 2001-2002 and was attended by the organization's voting members, friends and supporters.

SARA LEE EXEC VISITS RP
Top international executives of Sara Lee Corporation recently visited Manila to congratulate House of Sara Lee, one of the country's leading direct selling companies, for its record-breaking annual sales performance. During the visit, Simon Hemus, president for direct selling of Sara Lee Corporation, thanked local HoSL executives, employees and dealers for their valuable contribution to the company's steady growth worldwide. Hemus (fifth from left) is shown with (from left) Ian Cormack, VP-HR of Direct Selling Worldwide; John McAllister, general manager for Nutrimetics Thailand; Perry Mogar, president for direct selling-Asia; Bob Mason, CFO for direct selling worldwide; Stephen Leung, CFO for Nutrimetics Thailand; Manuel Recto, CFO of House of Sara Lee Philippines; and Ricky Sy, general manager of House of Sara Lee Philippines.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Manila 1099

MEMORANDUM

FOR : **Hon. ALBERTO B. ROMULO**
Secretary of Finance

SUBJECT : **CAO ON CUSTOMS BROKERAGE FEES**

DATE : **27 April 2001**

Forwarded for approval is a Customs Administrative Order (CAO) on the new Customs Brokerage Fees as signed by the Commissioner.

The new schedule, initially proposed by various brokerage organizations, was subsequently discussed in a series of meetings with members of the Port Users Confederation (PUC), the umbrella organization of 22 industry groups representing the trading community. PUC, in turn, endorsed the new rates to the Bureau.

The PUC endorses the new rates in view of the increasing administrative, operational and other costs of brokerage business. (Please see Annex A).

The last adjustments in the Customs brokerage fees were established through CAO 3-96 as may be gleaned from Annex B hereof, which also shows in a matrix the percentage difference between the existing rates and the new rates.

The new rates take effect fifteen days from approval and publication of the CAO.

For consideration/approval.

(Sgd.) **TITUS B. VILLANUEVA**
Commissioner

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Manila 1099

CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 1-2001

SUBJECT: RATES OF CUSTOMS BROKERAGE FEES

Pursuant to the provision of Section 651 of the Revised Administrative Code and Section 608 of the Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines (TCCP), as amended by Presidential Decree No. 1464, the rates of Customs Brokerage Fees charged by Customs Brokers and Brokerage Firms in all ports of the Philippines shall be, as follows:

I. **Formal/Warehousing Entries and Transshipment.** For services rendered to clear shipments covered by Formal/Warehousing Entries and Transshipment:

DUTIABLE VALUE OF SHIPMENT	FROM	NEW RATES
	(CAO 3-96)	(per entry)
Up To P 10,000	P 885.95	P 1,300
Over P 10,000 to 20,000	1,328.91	2,000
Over P 20,000 to 30,000	1,771.91	2,700
Over P 30,000 to 40,000	2,214.84	3,300
Over P 40,000 to 50,000	2,433.38	3,600
Over P 50,000 to 60,000	2,657.82	4,000
Over P 60,000 to 100,000	3,100.79	4,700
Over P 100,000 to 200,000	3,543.75	5,300

Over P 200,000 - P 5,300 on the first P 200,000 plus one-eight of one percent in excess thereof.

II. **Informal Entries.** For services rendered to clear shipments covered by Informal Entries—

FROM	TO
P 469.22	P 700

III. **Export Declarations.** For services rendered to clear shipments covered by export declarations, *one-half* of the new rates specified under the preceding Paragraph I.

IV. **Other Services.** For other services, specifically, in relation to—

	FROM	TO
1. Obtaining shipside permit	P 885.95	P 1,300
2. Obtaining transfer permit	P 885.95	P 1,300
3. Withdrawal entry *(warehousing articles)*		
a. complete withdrawal	P 1,328.93	P 2,000
b. partial withdrawal *(for every withdrawal)*	P 1,012.50	P 1,500

All other rules, regulations or orders inconsistent herewith are hereby modified and/or superseded accordingly.

This Order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after approval and publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

(Sgd.) **TITUS B. VILLANUEVA**
Commissioner

APPROVED:

(Sgd.) **ALBERTO G. ROMULO**
Secretary of Finance

Date Approved:
May 21, 2001

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Manila 1099

CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 2-2001

SUBJECT : **RATES OF CUSTOMS FEES AND CHARGES**

Pursuant to Sections 608 and Section 3301 to 3304, Tariff and Customs Code of the Philippines, in relation to Section 36, Administrative Code of 1987 and Executive Orders Nos. 197 and 218, both series of year 2000 as implemented by DOFand DBM Joint Circular No. 2000-2 dated April 3, 2000, the rates of Customs fees and charges in all ports of the Philippines shall be as follows:

1. **Import Processing Fees**
For shipments processed under Formal/Informal Entries

DUTIABLE VALUE OF SHIPMENT	NEW RATES
	(per entry)
Up to P 250,000	P 250
Over P 250,000 to 500,000	500
Over P 500,000 to 750,000	750
Over P 750,000	1,000

2. **Refund Processing Fees/Docket Fees**
On ordinary claims for refund of tax and duty payments, including cash bonds; and for each formal protest/appeal from the decision of the District Collector/Valuation and Classification Review Committee (VCRC).

AMOUNT OF CLAIM/ PROTESTED AMOUNT	PROCESSING FEES/ DOCKET FEE
Up to P 50,000	P 500
Over P 50,000 to 100,000	600
Over P 100,000 to 200,000	700
Over P 200,000 to 300,000	800
Over P 300,000 to 400,000	900
Over P 400,000 to 500,000	1,000
Over P 500,000 to 750,000	1,500
Over P 750,000 to 1,000,000	2,000
Over P 1,000,000	3,000

3. **Administrative Fees**

3.1.	*Issuance of Certificates*	
3.1.1.	Certificate of Payment	P 100
3.1.2.	Tax Credit Certificate	P 100
3.1.3.	Certificate of Clearance from outstanding account, Tax Credit, Tax Debit, and related matters	P 100
3.1.4.	Other certificates not herein specified, if such are issued in the course of routine administration and do not subserve any special pecuniary interest of the party concerned therein	P 100
3.2.	*Issuance of Permits*	
3.2.1.	To render overtime services for processing/releasing imported goods	P 400
3.2.2.	To take cigars aboard ship, per thousand cigars *(secured by/given to persons, other than the passengers)*	P 100
3.2.3.	To take cigarettes aboard ship, per thousand cigarettes, *(secured by/given to persons other than the passengers)*	P 100
3.2.4.	Transshipment of cigar and/or cigarettes from one foreign vessel to another	*peso equivalent of two US Dollars ($2.00) per carton of fifty reams*
3.3.	*Registration Fees*	
3.3.1.	To participate in public auction sale, per auction	P 2,000
3.3.2.	For importers to transact business with the Bureau	P 1,000
3.3.3.	For renewal/updates of the registration of importers, per year	P 500
3.4.	*Accreditation Fees*	
3.4.1.	To practice Customs Brokerage per port of entry,	
	• individual broker	P 500
	• brokerage firms	P 1,000
3.4.2.	To renew brokerage accreditation, per year	
	• individual	P 300
	• brokerage firms	P 500
3.4.3.	For Commercial banks and surety companies to transact business with the Bureau, per quarter	P 100
3.5.	*Circularization*	
3.5.1.	per circular originating from or requested by any private individuals, corporations or entities	P 1,000
3.6.	*Documentary Customs Stamps*	
3.6.1.	For each entry for immediate transportation in bond	P 100
3.6.2.	For each bond accepted or renewed	P 200
3.6.3.	For each approval of application in respect to transaction covered by general bond	P 200
3.6.4.	For each amendment allowed to a Foreign Inward Manifest	P 100
3.6.5.	For every formal protest filed before the Collector of Customs	P 200
3.6.6.	For each appeal in protest and seizure cases	P 200

The Bureau is hereby authorized to increase the cost of all **Accountable Prenumbered Customs Forms** based on the cost of printing plus 25% mark-up to cover handling and security cost at the Bureau to take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in a Customs Memorandum Order.

Repealing Clause—

All orders, rules and regulations inconsistent herewith are repealed or modified accordingly.

Effectivity Clause—

This order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after approval and publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

(Sgd.) **TITUS B. VILLANUEVA**
Commissioner

APPROVED:
(Sgd.) **ALBERTO G. ROMULO**
Secretary of Finance

Date Approved:
May 21, 2001

BMW wins top overall award for Asia

BMW Z9 Cabrio

BMW is the top car brand in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand, and also clinched the top overall award for Asia for the second consecutive year, according to a poll conducted by Reader's Digest in Asia.

The survey covered a range of lifestyle and everyday products, and was conducted during October last year in 6 key Asian markets—Hong Kong, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand. The results were compiled from a total sample of 6,000 respondents, 1,000 from each of the six markets surveyed. As in previous years, hundreds of brands were voted for, but only the top performing brands in the survey were honored with the title "SuperBrands Gold" winner.

BMW was one of four car brands selected to be a SuperBrand. A SuperBrand is defined as the leading brand in class, quality and dependability. Survey participants evaluated their preferred brands on quality, value, image, trustworthiness and the understanding of customer needs. Top-performing brands were based on their scores in the survey, on both the number of votes they received (quantitative) and the ratings they received on the brand values (qualitative).

In achieving top position for Asia, BMW edged out Honda (second), Mercedes-Benz (third) and Toyota (fourth).

Reader's Digest has been in Asia for over 35 years and is Asia's best-read magazine with an audited circulation of over 700,000 copies monthly. Reader's Digest enjoys a readership of 4.7 million readers.

This is one of many awards won by BMW in Asia in recent years. BMW has been ranked as the top car company in Asia for three consecutive years in an annual survey of corporate executives and professionals conducted by The Far Eastern Economic Review. Published in its "Review 200" year-end double issue in December 2000, the results were derived from a survey conducted in 11 countries by ACNielsen. The Far Eastern Economic Review is one of Asia's leading newsmagazines.

IN ITS CLASS

Nissan Cefiro Brougham VIP offers unmatched luxury

THE CURRENT crop of Nissan Cefiros continue the class-leading heritage of the line and has continuously raised the bar of medium-sized cars since its introduction in the local market in late 1996.

Backed up by lifestyle-enhancing luxury features all wrapped in its timeless form, the Nissan Cefiro line remains the most popular choice. The Nissan Cefiro Brougham VIP leads the way with cutting edge features that can measure up to those found in luxury cars.

At a glance, the Nissan Cefiro Brougham VIP comes dressed for success. Easily recognizable in a two-tone exterior color scheme, its privileged owners are pampered in a compact, mobile space they can exclusively call their "own."

A year after its introduction, this top of-the-line Nissan Cefiro model is still the only one in its class offering a cabin entertainment AV system. The AV system has a control panel in the rear center armrest for ease of use. An LCD TV monitor is mounted on the roof headlining for a more relaxed and enjoyable viewing of their favorite VCD movies. Completing the setup is an audiophile-standard 2 DIN Sony stereo system, 6-disc CD/VCD changer and a 6-speaker configuration system for optimal audio-visual appreciation.

The Nissan Cefiro Brougham VIP also pioneers the M-Class segment with rear power seats for optimal comfort and convenience. The fore and aft positions of the rear seats can be adjusted electronically. The built-in rear backseat massager adds to the car's soothing ride. The front passenger seat's back rest can open up to reveal a retractable, relax footrest.

The Nissan Cefiro Brougham VIP is equipped with an air purifier. Located at the rear package tray and integrated with the high-mount stop lamp, the air-purifier ensures a clean and germ-free cabin environment. Rear windows and backlight sunshades add to the cozy feel of the rear compartment.

A fusion of leather, woodgrain, and chrome finish abound in the car's interiors. The seats, leather door trims, A/T shift knob and parking brake lever are donned in leather. The steering wheel, center console cluster, and the power control switch panel are in woodgrain finish. Features in chrome are the door handles, window moldings, inside door handles, body moldings, rear plate garnish, and dual tail-pipe finisher.

The Nissan Cefiro Brougham VIP is powered by the VQ engine, which has long been distinguished for its power masked in quiet and smooth dozes of acceleration. The Electronic Concentrated Engine Control or ECCS ensures the engine's intelligent performance, while the Multilink Beam suspension gives sharper steering control and an overall smooth ride.

The near perfect fusion of the Nissan Cefiro's esthetic and engineering technology proves instrumental in the Cefiro's continued dominance in the market, capturing 34.25 percent market share of the M-class segment in cumulative figures released by the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Campi) from May 2000 to April 2001.

The 1.6-liter car market

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

TEST-DRIVING a new luxury sports sedan such as the Volvo S60 is fun, but let's face it: most of us can't afford to buy and maintain a car that costs over two million bucks—nor even one million. Budget constraints limit us to the category below 2.0 liters when most of us are in the market for a new car. It's not only the acquisition cost of a car that must be taken into account, but also the annual registration and comprehensive insurance costs, maintenance and repair expenses and running costs. For optimum performance, cars in the two-million-peso-plus bracket usually require gasoline with the highest octane rating and consequently the highest price per liter. And, to top it off, big, high-performance cars drink an awful lot of gasoline. Thus, ordinary mortals like us make do with smaller, less powerful cars in the 1.6-liter class. Aware of this, auto manufacturers with assembly plants in the Philippines consider the 1.6-liter passenger car market the most lucrative and most fiercely contested arena after the Asian utility vehicle (AUV) market. (On the other hand, only Toyota, Mitsubishi and Isuzu are vying in the AUV car war at present.)

To stay alive in the keenly competitive 1.6-liter market, car manufacturers have been upgrading their 1.6-liter products with equipment that used to be considered expensive options, such as the anti-lock braking system or ABS, airbags, keyless entry and alarm system, a CD player, additional speakers (usually a pair of tweeters), leather seats and steering wheel, wood paneling, armrests or chrome trim. The car is repackaged with these features as standard equipment, if they weren't included as such before, and a new front grille, new taillights, fancier mag wheels and new exterior color choices are also thrown in sometimes for a complete facelift. In one instance a year or so ago, a manufacturer introduced a more powerful engine in a new variant of its staple product. This was the 1.8-liter powerplant in the Altis variant of the Toyota Corolla, although the 1.6-liter Corolla engine with automatic transmission was also offered in the Altis.

The add-ons may make a car safer and look better, but they also enable the manufacturer to increase its suggested retail price (SRP). The improvements, plus the declining exchange rate of the peso, justify a price hike. Result: you can't buy a Japanese 1.6-liter car anymore for less than P620,000. The cheapest 1.6-liter Japanese car in the market at present is the Ford Lynx GSi MT (manual transmission) at P620,000. The Lynx GSi AT (automatic transmission) costs P655,500 while the more upscale Lynx Ghia MT is priced at P710,000 and the Ghia AT goes for P745,000.

As of last April 23, a Corolla GLi MT had an SRP of P684,000 while the AT version of the same cost P714,000; the Corolla Altis 1.6 AT costs P750,000 while the 1.8 AT Altis sells for P814,000; the Nissan Sentra SLA MT costs P678,000, the SLA MT is priced at P708,000 while the top-of-the-line STA AT goes for P785,000; the Mitsubishi Lancer GLXi MT costs P668,000, the GLXi AT MX is sold at P785,000 while the two-door GSR AT can be bought for P780,000.

Passenger car market leader Honda launched the all-new 2001 Civic last February with the 1.6-liter Civic VTi MT having an SRP of P720,000 while the VTi AT sells for P755,000 and the top-of-the-line VTi-S costs P798,000. The latter price makes the VTi-S the most expensive locally assembled 1.6-liter car in the market, but then it's the top-of-the-line of the newest generation of this popular make of car. Meanwhile, rumors are rife that an all-new Corolla and Sentra are coming out this year. Incidentally, the facelifting of a car is no guarantee that an all-new model isn't just around the corner. In the same manner, advertisements offering easier financing terms for a car could indicate that a new model of the same would be launched soon.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Time is the best teacher. Unfortunately, it kills all its students.

* * *

E-mail comments to aida_sevilla @pacific.net.ph

Urethane windshield sealant good for your car

THE 1980S was the decade when car manufacturers responded to skyrocketing fuel prices by reducing vehicle weights and increasing vehicle aerodynamics. Although the metals used in the automobiles were not as heavy as older cars, they were also not as strong. That is why the windshield became a structural part of the vehicle as it supports the roof.

As the windshield became a designed safety feature of the vehicle, windshield replacement technology changed quickly and corresponding regulations emerged. US Department of Transportation regulations 212 and 216 set standards for windshield retention and roof crush during rollover. Moreover, with the windshield as a designed safety feature, glass repair shops have to consider specific regulations because they are now responsible for replacing the glass to meet OEM requirements.

10 times stronger

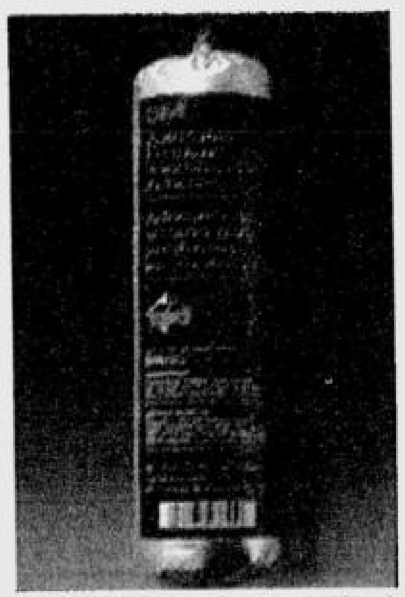
In the Philippines, there is quite a large presence of automotive glass installers as well as some car dealership shops that still use silicon sealant to install windshields. Though silicon sealant is cheaper than urethane sealant, it does not meet the OEM strength requirement and promotes rust on the metal surface of the car. Urethane sealant, on the other hand, proves to be up to 10 times stronger than the silicon sealant and offers higher adhering quality.

3M has been an innovator in the development of windshield replacement products and methods. It has provided products to the automotive industry for glass installation the past 40 years. In 1972, 3M responded to new auto glass technology by pioneering the use of an after-market polyurethane adhesive or sealant that quickly became the industry standard. In the 1980s and into the new century, it continues its history of innovation with products designed to work with the new flush-mounted windshields.

Windshield bonding

To respond to the need for stronger windshield installation and safer motoring, 3M created the auto glass urethane windshield adhesive, which comes in 310-ml flex packs with medium viscosity. It is a one-part moisture-curing urethane adhesive designed for windshield bonding and stationary glass attachment.

It allows the windshield to render more effective support to the car because the 3M Auto Glass Urethane Windshield Adhesive exceeds OEM strengths. When it comes to the safety of the driver and passengers, urethane sealant is definitely the right choice because life is priceless


3M Auto Glass Urethane Windshield Adhesive

Honda gives away racing items

HONDA Cars Philippines Inc. is inviting everyone to watch the BAR Honda and Jordan Honda compete in the Formula One championship series at the National Sports Grill every qualifying and race day and get a chance to win exciting genuine Honda Racing items.

Raffle draws are scheduled every 1 p.m. and 8 p.m. on the following dates:

- May 26 and 27—Monaco GP
- June 9 and 10—Canadian GP
- June 24 and 25—European GP
- June 30 and July 1—French GP
- July 14 and 15—British GP
- July 28 and 29—German GP
- Aug. 18 and 19—Hungarian GP
- Sept. 1 and 2—Belgian GP
- Sept. 15 and 16—Italian GP
- Sept. 29 and 30—United States GP
- Oct. 13 and 14—Japanese GP

National Sports Grill is located at the third floor, Greenbelt Mall, Ayala Center, Makati.

Also, Honda Racing is set to give away original helmets of Jacques Villeneuve and Oliver Panis of BAR Honda; Heinz-Herald Frentzen and Jarno Trulli of Jordan Honda in a free draw online. Log on to www.honda1.com and be the lucky winner who will join Honda as a VIP guest in one of the venues of the 2001 Grand Prix.

KIA Carnival Minivan

Kia promo features extra PMS incentive for Carnival Minivan

RIDING on the success of "Happy Days," Kia has recently launched the "Happy Days II" promo for this month. Under the promo, interested buyers may continue to avail of ultra low down payment financing schemes (up to 20 percent down payment subject to bank approval) with competitive interest rates and monthly payments. However, those interested in the Carnival will also be treated to free parts and labor for periodic maintenance service (PMS) for up to 6 months or 10,000 km whichever may come first.

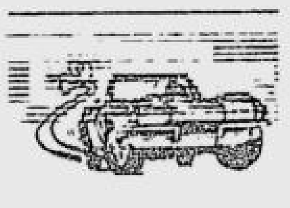
"The Carnival already represents tremendous value for money. This was validated by the model's recent 9 out of 10 verdict on the popular English television show 'Top Gear,'" said Ed Limon, vice president for marketing of Columbian Motors, sole authorized distributor for Kia products in the Philippines. "The free PMS added under Happy Days II provides more value and makes the Carnival ownership experience even more pleasant for the Kia buyer," Limon added.

The "Happy Days II" promo is applicable to all vehicles in the Kia model range. It will run until May 31 and is available at selected authorized Kia dealers nationwide.

Mitsubishi's Quick Quartet

FULL TANK

Al S. Mendoza



I READ in the wires (Reuters) that Ford Motor Co. of Detroit, Michigan, may soon push for its expanded recall of Firestone tires. The car giant has been analyzing Firestone's Wilderness AT tires and will announce the results shortly.

Reuters said that in a statement, Ford chief executive officer Jacques Nasser said the analysis of the Firestone tires is based on discussions with the tire manufacturer and the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

"We are deeply disappointed that upon hearing and seeing this analysis of Firestone Wilderness AT tires, Firestone decided not to work together for the safety of our shared customers, which is the only issue that matters," Nasser said.

He also defended the safety of Ford's Explorer sport utility vehicle, saying it has consistently ranked near the top among SUVs in its class.

That is one thing I like in America. The government implements strictly its rules on road safety, particular tires and vehicles.

Another thing is, America's car giants are quick to recall cars or tires at the slightest sign that a defect has been reported. Customers always have the last say when it comes to the issue of road-worthiness. In short, "lemons" have no place in America's roads.

* * *

Lest you get waylaid, it's almost definite that Mitsubishi Motors will be the exclusive car sponsor again of the 86th Philippine Open Golf championship set at Wack Wack from June 28 to July 1. If plans don't miscarry, cars will be staked as hole-in-one prizes during the Media-Officials tournament, Pro-Am and the Open proper.

Here's a little plug for Mitsubishi's Mel Dizon, Froy Dytianquin, Thelma Lozano and Ding Benitez, the team that commands respect from not only their peers in the industry but also from the automotive media.

I call them the Quick Quartet for their speedy response to any problem thrown at them, whether from the motoring journalists or customers.

Cheers!

* * *

Jacques Villeneuve is one of the most colorful racers of Formula One. I am not his fan but I like his style. I met him a while back in the Formula One leg in Kuala Lumpur. Below is his profile written by Reuters' Timothy Collings:

Jacques Villeneuve is one of Formula One's enigmatic characters but one man who knows him well is his race engineer, Jock Clear.

Clear has followed Villeneuve through a roller-coaster career in Grand Prix racing. He won the title with the Canadian driver in 1997 at Williams and followed him to the newly formed British American Racing (BAR) team two years ago.

Since then, Villeneuve has struggled to break into the top six at the developing BAR outfit but Clear has never lost faith.

There was no man more proud at the Circuit de Catalunya last weekend when Villeneuve finished third in the Spanish Grand Prix to take his first podium place since 1998 and the BAR team's first since it was formed.

"It's been a long time coming for Jacques personally," said Clear. "But more significantly for the team, he's more happy for the team than for himself.

"We've had two very hard years but we've been going in the right direction and the podium has been threatening for quite a while."

"I was with him for every podium so this one's no different. In some respects the podium we had in 1998 was a big disappointment because that's all we ever had in 1998 and that was coming off the back of winning the championship.

"This is quite the opposite, this is just fantastic for everybody. It's a culmination of two-and-a-half years of very hard work and in a way it's a relief that Jacques is the guy that put it there after all that he's been through these last two years."

Villeneuve is shy and does not like the public relations and media side of the business. That has led to rumors of unrest at the BAR team, particularly when they failed to score a point in their debut season in 1999.

Villeneuve was linked with a move back to Williams at the end of 1999 but he is a close friend of BAR managing director Craig Pollock and his loyalty to the cause has, at last, been rewarded this season with improved performances from the Honda-powered cars.

Clear believes Villeneuve has developed as a driver at BAR and will thrive this season alongside the more competitive nature of his new teammate Olivier Panis, who replaced the ineffective Ricardo Zonta before the start of the season.

Clear added: "This BAR experience has changed him dramatically. He is considerably more easy-going than he ever was at Williams and that's really born out of patience."

"He's had to learn patience the hard way, he's had to learn the difficulties involved in building a Formula One team and building a Formula One car when you haven't had 20 years experience to build on and it's made him a little more understanding of what's involved.

"You could say it's taken a little bit of the edge off him but I think those of us who know him well recognize that with Olivier here now, and being under pressure this season, the edge has suddenly come back.

"I think the first couple of races and the problems we had with reliability hit him quite badly and he didn't take it well."

Clear said Villeneuve would not rest on his laurels now that he had made it to the podium and the team would need to keep improving if they wanted to hold on to the driver.

"We've had some fairly heated discussions within BAR over the past couple of weeks," said Clear. "The atmosphere is not as good as it has been because people are under pressure.

"We're now saying to people we either perform or we get out because we've actually got a world champion driver who we're not giving a world champion car to for the third year running and that's not acceptable.

"Everybody's responded fantastically. Everybody's felt the pressure and yes it does create some tension but that's not necessarily a bad thing and (last) weekend is testament to the fact that people have responded to the pressure."

* * *

QUOTE ME. **Kill that temptation to use the cell phone while you are driving by placing it beyond your reach, preferably at the back seat.**

Isuzu Fuego Sport: Clutchless workhorse

TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY VERNON B. SARNE

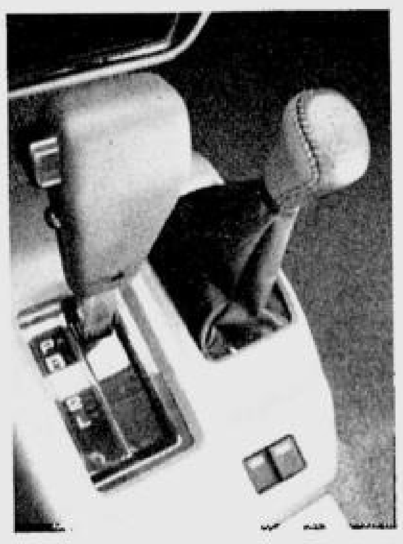
NEXT to the Asian utility vehicle and compact sedan segments, the compact pickup category of the local car market has been the most hotly contested. And like the first two segments mentioned where there have been perennial favorites the past few years (Toyota Revo and Honda Civic, respectively), the compact pickup group has been pretty much dominated by one model—however barely at times. We're talking of the Isuzu Fuego, a pickup that has incredibly survived the arrivals of formidable and newer competition, including the Nissan Frontier, the Ford Ranger, and the Mitsubishi Endeavor and Strada.

Isuzu has managed to pull it off without the benefit of an all-new model. All it has been doing is to constantly refurbish its bread-and-butter vehicle, which somehow always succeeds in getting the nod of the market. This trick is at no time more evident than now, when Isuzu has just rolled off an extremely hot-looking Fuego Sport. Flaunting sexy overfenders, aggressive bumper overrider with foglamps, a new and classy-looking vertical radiator grille, side step boards, and molded mudguards, the rear- or four-wheel-drive Fuego Sport will give the Strada a run for its vanity mirror. Add a nice set of 16-inch alloy wheels with a spiffy swirling design and we have to concede that the Fuego might be the best-looking compact pickup out there.

To complete the handsome package, Isuzu wrapped the seats, the steering wheel, the shift knob, and the center console in leather. Depending on how you got up from your bed, however, the quasi-wood trim on the dash could either look elegant or plain tacky.

Of course, an esthetic overhaul will not be consummate without the addition of new body colors. Isuzu aces this test with new two-tone paint jobs that are certified to catch your attention as absolutely as Miriam Defensor-Santiago's silly grin on her campaign posters. The Fuego Sport has red, green, blue, or yellow combined haze silver for that car-show-worthy look. Our test unit's sonic yellow skin is reminiscent of the Pinatubo Edition of the Ranger.

ISUZU'S bread-and-butter vehicle is constantly refurbished.



THE SHIFT knob is wrapped in leather.

The biggest new offering in the Fuego Sport, however, is the availability of a 4-speed automatic transmission. This may not be an original idea—the Frontier's clutchless shifter predates the Fuego's by a few years—but it now gives potential Fuego buyers something new to look forward to.

How is Isuzu's first attempt at providing its diesel pickup with an automatic tranny? In a word, impressive. In more than a word, much better than that of, say, the automatic transmission of the new 2.0-liter gasoline-engined Revos. Yes, it's hard to believe but it's true.

The Fuego Sport's 2.8-liter OHV in-line-4 direct-injection turbodiesel engine may not be the most powerful in its class (that distinction belongs to the Ranger) with a modest 100 horses of brawn, but the much-vaunted Isuzu innovation in diesel technology certainly doesn't hurt. The ride, too, may be no match for the nearly carlike ride of the Strada, but fill the cargo bed to the brim and be amazed at this pickup's poise even during hard labor.

The automatic Fuego Sport is eager to serve you at P1,020,000—a reasonable price to pay for a proven and now much better-looking workhorse.

Overall, the Fuego Sport is like the honor student who didn't top a single subject in school but ended up being the valedictorian anyway by virtue of consistency.

FILL the cargo bed to the brim and be amazed at this pickup's poise even during hard labor.

FAST FACTS
ISUZU FUEGO SPORT

Type: Rear-/four-wheel 4-door compact pickup
Engine: 2.8-liter OHV in-line-4 direct-injection turbodiesel
Maximum power: 100 hp @ 3,800 rpm
Maximum torque: 23.0 kg-m @ 2,300 rpm
Transmission: 4-speed automatic
Dimensions (L x W x H): 5.11 m x 1.82 m x 1.73 m
Wheelbase: 3.02 m
Front suspension: Independent wishbone arm and torsion bar spring with stabilizer bar
Rear suspension: Rigid live axle with semielliptical alloy and steel leaf spring
Brakes: Ventilated discs in front; drums in rear
Safety: Child protection lock
Wheels and tires: 16-inch alloys; 245/75 R16
Seating capacity: 5
Price: P1,020,000

Summer vacation blast with Shell Velocity

DAYDREAMING about Bali or Boracay is most likely. Because after all, who can blame you for doing so?

Ah, Bali. With its picturesque backdrop of rice paddies down hillsides, volcanoes soaring through clouds, lush, tropical forests and divine beaches lapped up by the warm waters of the Indian Ocean, it is truly one of the places to be this summer.

Or how about Boracay? Imagine yourself combing the shoreline and feeling its fine, powdery white sand caressing your feet, swimming in the crystal clear waters and basking under a perfectly clear blue sky. And at night, you can barhop your way to the most happening bars and discos or simply commune with nature and stare at the evening sky littered with hundreds of stars.

Well, enough of the daydreaming! This summer, Shell Velocity not only lets you rev up your car engines, but your summer vacation plans as well, courtesy of its SummeRush promo. Ongoing until May 27, this exciting promo gives motorists a chance to win a free trip to this summer's hottest of hotspots. Go ahead and frolic, swim, relax and have fun under the hot summer sun in the exhilarating locales of Laguna, Cavite, Bali and Boracay.

Winning is absolutely easy. Just gas up on P300 worth of high-octane Shell Velocity fuel and get a raffle coupon and a Shell Velocity sticker.

BE spotted by these gorgeous Shell Velocity girls.

Simply stick this properly on your vehicle and voila! You already have a chance to wallow in the world-class beaches of Bali or Boracay—grand prizes are at stake for the grand draw scheduled on June 1.

But that's not all. Because if your car, with the Shell Velocity sticker, is spotted by a roving team at specific Shell stations every Friday and Saturday, then you are on your way to win fabulous day trip packages to any of these exciting destinations like Holiday Inn Resort Mimosa, Seven Suites, Enchanted Kingdom, Splash Island, Club Manila East and Island Cove.

Last week, the roving patrol team—composed of deejays from Shell Velocity's partner stations like Citilite 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, Your Music Authority 99.5RT and 105 K-Lite—have already spotted several vehicles that have the stickers prominently displayed, sending a lot of lucky motorists to an exciting day trip while giving them a chance to visit Bali or Boracay.

So just drop your raffle coupons at designated drop boxes located at select Shell service stations, load up on Shell Velocity and make your summer vacation the hottest experience you won't ever forget.

A539 TIRE
Comfort and safety at its peak

IN THE UNITED STATES, at least 95 lives are lost every day to vehicular accidents. Statistics from the US Center for Injury Prevention and Control show that 54 percent of accidental deaths in the last five years resulted from motoring incidents. The causes of such deaths range from physical factors such as loss of visual perception, diminished hearing and slower reflex, to automotive problems like tires skidding because of sleet, snow or rain.

While human physical capabilities inevitably deteriorate with age, motoring problems can be minimized with proper car maintenance and by using superior car parts. In the case of slippery roads, a high-performance tire that can maintain its rough grip is essential.

Newest tire model

The A539 tire, Yokohama Tire Philippines' newest model, offers motorists just the degree of safety and comfort they need without compromising its performance. Created with Zeruma, an agent that evenly diffuses silica in rubber, the tire can handle sudden changes in motoring conditions from dry to wet roads and is compatible with weather conditions in Asia as well as in western continents.

Its unique groove arrangement composed of helical and acute lines optimizes drainage capabilities in heavy rains and gives the vehicle a firm grip on dry surfaces. In addition, it has straight grooves like all other regular tires that provide vehicular stability during cornering and that counter the effects of contact pressure, resulting in being forced to the shoulder around bends.

The A539 offers a noiseless and comfortable ride with its four-pitch pattern, specifically arranged to suppress the buildup of rhythmic noise. It has grooves of variable depths that reduce uneven wear and the noise that the wear produces.

Durability

The tire's durability was recently put to the test in a drive covering 50,000 kilometers of Australia's rough ranges and plains, including urban and country roads, and interstate highways. Weather conditions during the test drive ranged from 30-degree heat to rain and cold.

"The A539 proved efficient in coping with the rigorous demands placed on a tire under Australian operating conditions and recorded higher levels of performance compared with the benchmark in terms of ride, handling and noise," commented Yokohama Tyre Australia technical service manager Roy Molloy who supervised the test program.

The tire underwent rigorous testing in several racecourses such as Le Mans, France; Nuerburgring Old Course, Col de Torin, and Autobahn, Germany and Italy. It has exceeded expectations in terms of braking, wet and dry handling, durability and stability.

Available in 33 sizes, the A539 is suited for a wide range of vehicles in the Asian market and, can service compact sedans and sports cars. While its competitive prices vary from P3,000 to P5,000, it offers far greater value for money, ensuring long-term quality, and a safe and comfortable performance.

Honda City Media Challenge...

(From page B10)

Star, Manila Bulletin, Manila Times, Associated Press, Gadgets Magazine, Metro and Sports Weekly represent the print publications; while Autoindustriya.com, Drive Online and Kotse.com represent the leading motoring websites.

The City Media Challenge is a dirt trial speed event, taking place on a specially designed surfaced and unsurfaced track at the Manila Harbor Center.

Each round is run for at least two heats, the minimum length per heat being 800 meters. No overall individual winner will be declared. Instead the winner will be the team having accumulated the fastest time, counting only the best times of three participants from each team. Total points from each of the three rounds will determine the series winner.

Honda Cars Philippines will be fielding four units of the Honda City Type Z as the official competition vehicles, with two 1300 LXi's and two 1500 Exi's to be used throughout the three rounds.

Official fuel for the Media Challenge will be Caltex Vortex, while the lubricants will be provided by Havoline Energy. Bridgestone and Firestone supplied the official tires, while the other sponsors include Nodalo's Trading for the rollcage, sumpguard and muffler, and Aitech for the car stickers.

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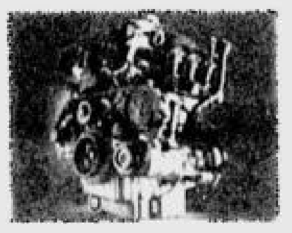
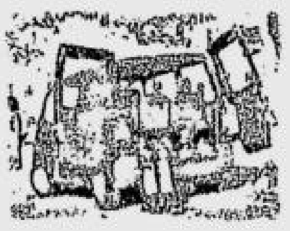
Mercedes-Benz Vito



▸ The CDI diesel engine incorporates a fuel-efficient, revolutionary common-rail direct fuel injection and four-valve technology.



▸ The Vito offers plenty of room for 10 passengers and sufficient luggage space.

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MOTORING

CESAR D. MANGAWANG, Editor

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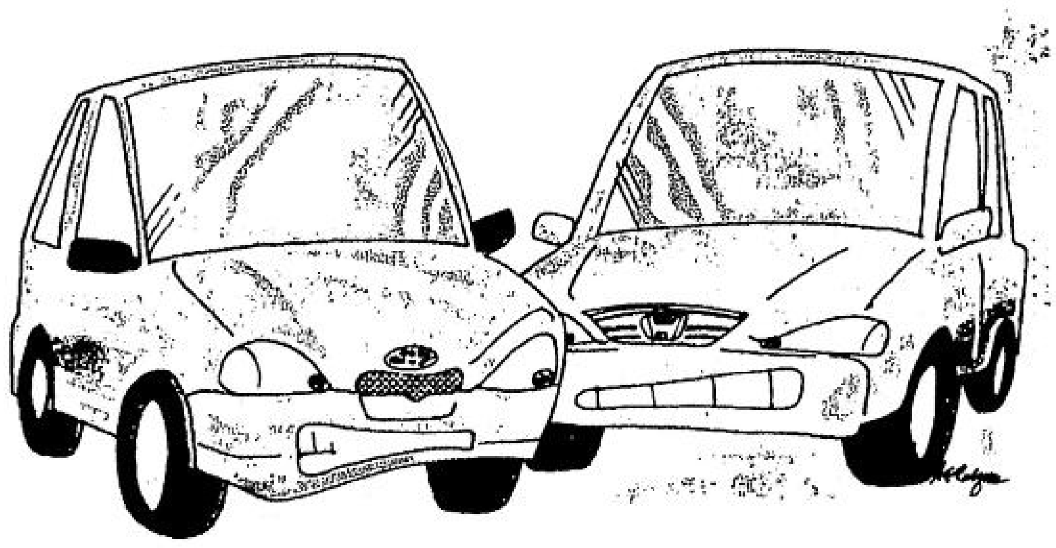
AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

'Dog-eat-dog' rivalry starts in June

BY TESSA R. SALAZAR



THIS is how automotive industry observers are predicting the incoming auto launches for the third and last quarters of 2001. Vying auto contenders will be grappling for the top. A shakedown is predicted in the passenger car market as observers predict new models could break Honda Civic's firm foothold. There will be numerous attempts to wrest the AUV crown from Toyota.

Out of the doldrums and back in the scene, the "fresh" Nissan Motor Philippines of the Yulons is expected to put up a tough fight with the launch of a new Nissan Sentra come second week of June. Feature-per-feature, said an enthusiast who has seen it in another country, the new Sentra model is expected to give Honda Civic 2001 a run for its money.

The New Sentra is also expected to compete hood-to-hood with a new Corolla, said industry observers. That is, if a new Corolla will ever make it out to the market this year. Toyota Motor Philippines is reportedly busy normalizing internal operations and coping with a long line of Revo orders delayed by the recent strike. Another bold prediction is the coming out of yet another Mitsubishi Lancer, but this is unconfirmed.

"Almost all passenger car models—except for the Civic—are already due for replacement. I think this is what the industry needs right now. If they can introduce new models, definitely the market will be exciting and would generate customer interest," said an industry player who refused to be named.

He further noted that even if Honda had captured the young market because of the image, styling and the engine technology, HCPI would not be able to sustain that facing fresh competition.

"The Filipino market is very conscious as far as styling is concerned. They want a flashy, head-turner sedan. The Civic is a good car but it's a rather subtle followup of the previous Civics they had."

The Mitsubishi Adventure, observers suggest, needs to come out with a replacement. The same goes for the Isuzu Fuego.

Universal Motors Corp., said industry sources, is launching the New Frontier. Luxury sedan Nissan Cefiro, meanwhile, is due for minor changes.

SUZUKI HOSTS 4th VITARA FUN RIDE

Suzuki hosts for the fourth straight year its Vitara Fun Ride for Vitara and Grand Vitara owners and their families and friends on June 3, 2001.

The event will bring a convoy of Vitaras/Grand Vitaras on a close to 320-kilometer long scenic drive from Manila to Mt. Samat in Pilar, Bataan and on to Subic via Morong, Bataan. Unlike in the past when participating teams took part in rally-style "treasure hunts," they will now take a leisurely pace and join a photo contest with the theme "My Family, My Vitara."

The event is in keeping with the company's objectives of promoting family togetherness, appreciation of the environment and road safety.

Caltex Vortex will be the official fuel sponsor while YKL Film is the sponsor for the photo contest. Cash prizes will be given for the photo contest while valuable raffle prizes and surprise gifts will be at stake during the fellowship lunch at Subic's Summit Hall.

This event is open to all owners of Suzuki Vitara and Grand Vitara but limited to the first 40 Vitara/Grand Vitara owners who will register on a first come, first served basis. Registration is free. Deadline for registration is on **May 25, 2001.**

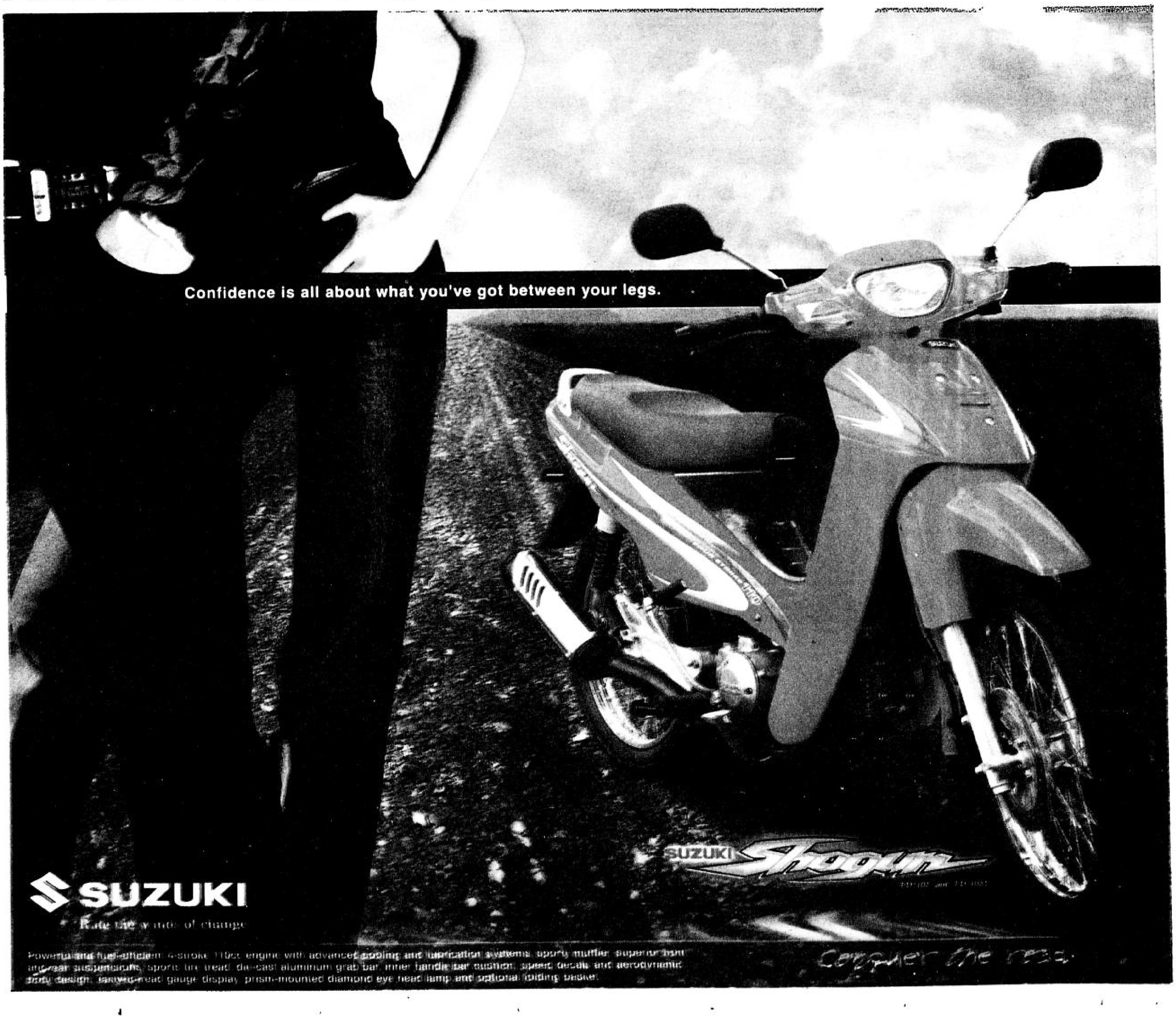
For details, please call Suzuki Philippines, Inc. Automobile Marketing Department at telephone numbers 671-9722 to 28 loc. 229, 671-5722/671-5719 DL and look for Arvie Fugoso or Lou Villareal or call your nearest Suzuki Automobile dealer in Metro Manila and San Fernando, Pampanga.

Honda City Media Challenge now on its 4th season

ALL systems are on go for the inaugural round of the Honda City Media Challenge on Saturday at the Manila Harbor Center. Slated to run for three rounds from May to July, this year's event is presented by Honda Car Philippines in partnership with Caltex Vortex and Havoline Motor Oil.

The teams, consisting of four members from different media groups, will be battling each other for the top slots in the 1.3 Lxi and 1.5 Exi categories. Media groups represented are ABS-CBN News, Auto Review and Motoring Today for television; dzBB, dzEC, dzMM, dzRH and K-Lite for radio. Inquirer, Business World, Philippine

HONDA/p.B9



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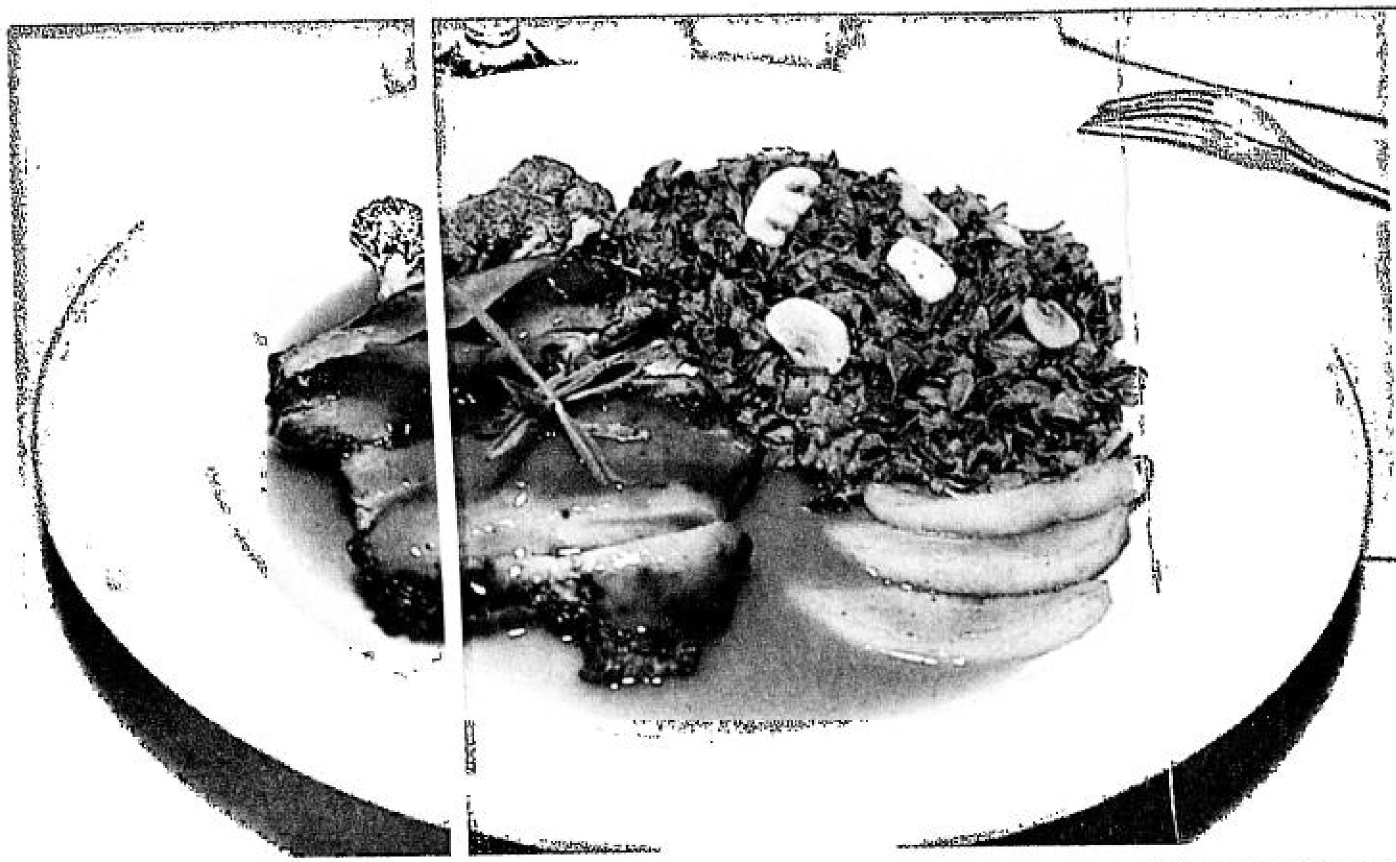

CHICKEN Cornish with wild rice and port sauce

Back to the classic

Now serving at Le Mécène is traditional yet far-from-predictable French cuisine

BY ALEX Y. VERGARA
PHOTOS BY BETOY JOHNSON

DO fusion dishes often leave your taste buds confused from the odd melange of spices and ingredients? A new restaurant in Makati offers classic French cuisine that promises to whet the appetite rather than shock the palate.

The owners of Le Mécène (corner of Kalayaan and Makati Avenues, tel. 899-3810) aim to reintroduce old-fashioned French cooking to Filipinos by using only traditional methods and ingredients.

The group, composed of Joey Camara, Vanessa Yap and chef Louie Llamado, is also behind Garlic Rose and Café Caribana in Malate. Llamado trained and worked in the United States before returning to the country several years ago. He also owns the famous Café by the Ruins in Baguio.

They don't intend to put fusion cooking down. Rather they want to provide diners, who still go for typical French fare, with a cheaper and better alternative. "Some fusion dishes can be quite good," says Camara. "But certain combinations can sometimes clash.

"The older generation generally goes for traditional French food," he adds, "while the younger ones are more open and adventurous to fusion cooking. So we toyed with the idea of featuring classic French dishes with a modern touch."

Despite the classic pairings, Llamado is able to come up with an exciting lineup of dishes that's far from predictable.

The pan-seared foie gras (P530 per order), for instance, consists of tender slivers of duck meat served on a piece of bread and garnished with fresh greens in wine sauce and balsamic vinegar. To tone down the rich dish and make it more palatable, the chef has added slices of apples.

The Cornish hen with port sauce and wild

BACK/ p.C6

LE Mécène's smoking section

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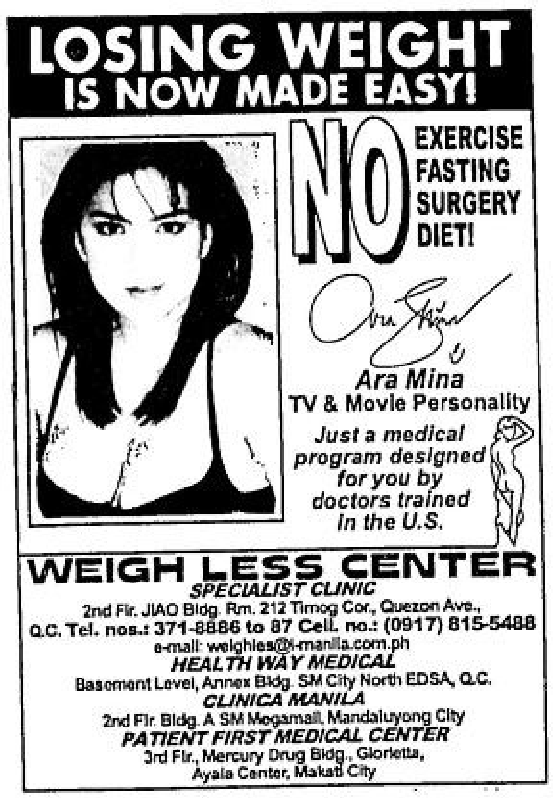

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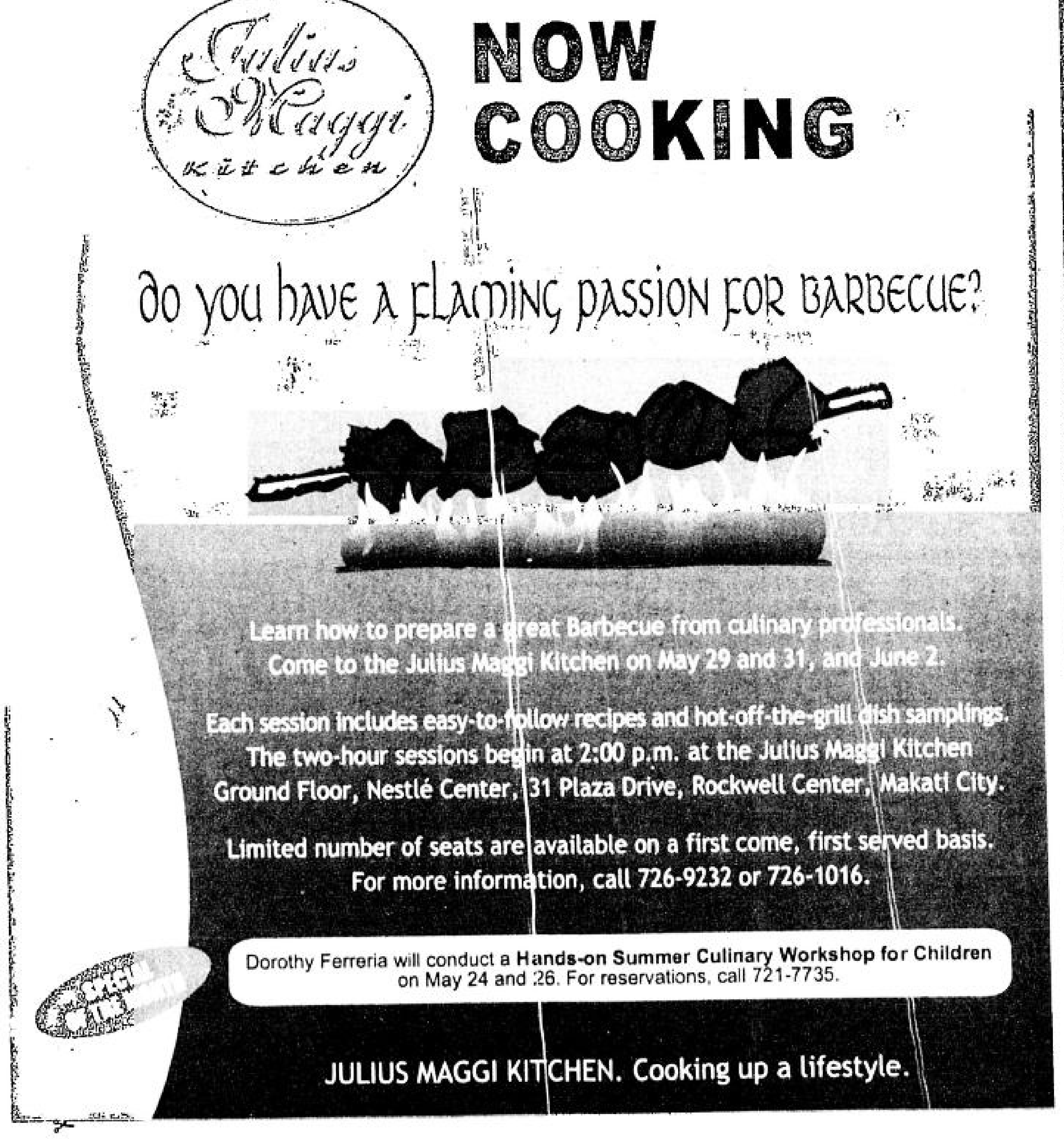

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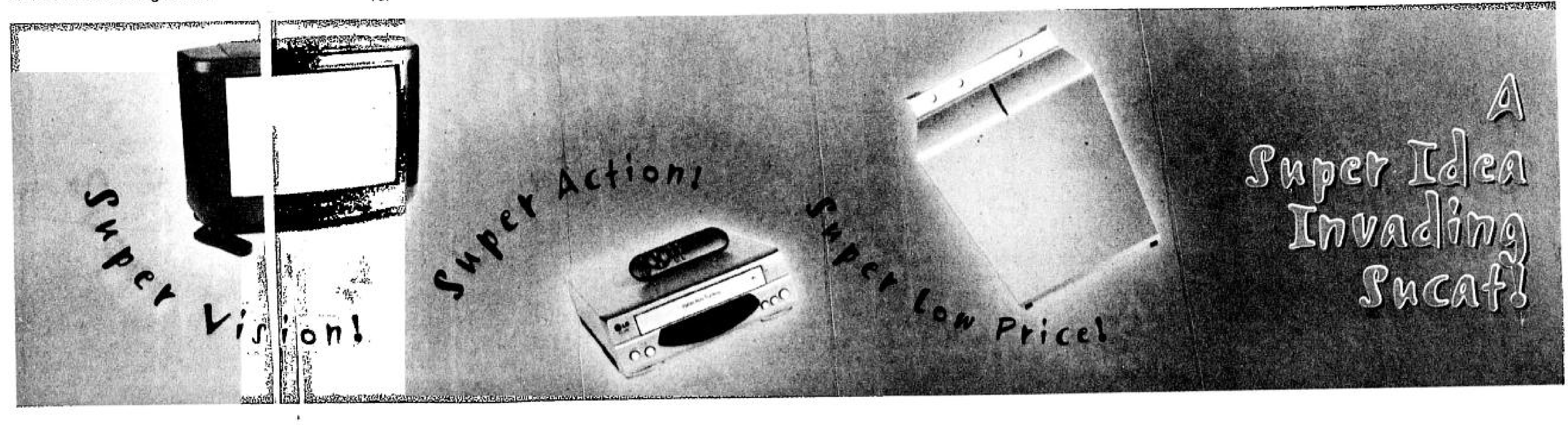
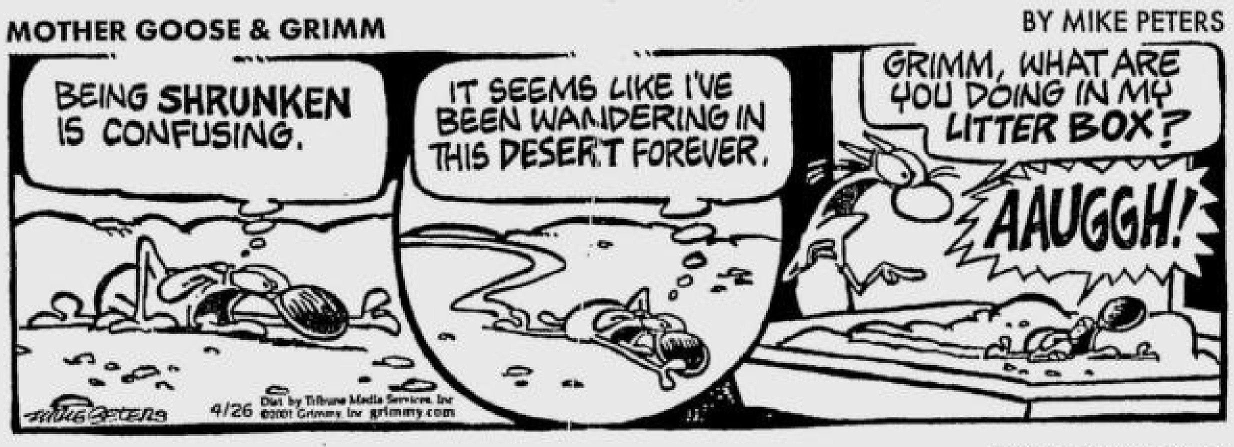


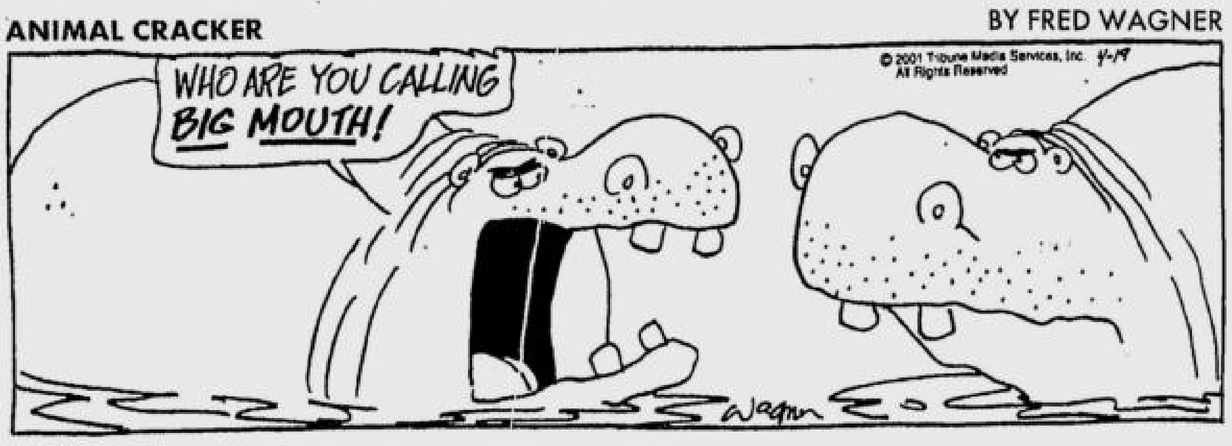
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


BEING SHRUNKEN IS CONFUSING.
IT SEEMS LIKE I'VE BEEN WANDERING IN THIS DESERT FOREVER.
GRIMM, WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY LITTER BOX?
AAUGGH!
MIKE PETERS 4/26 Dist by Tribune Media Services Inc ©2001 Grimmy Inc grimmy.com

ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER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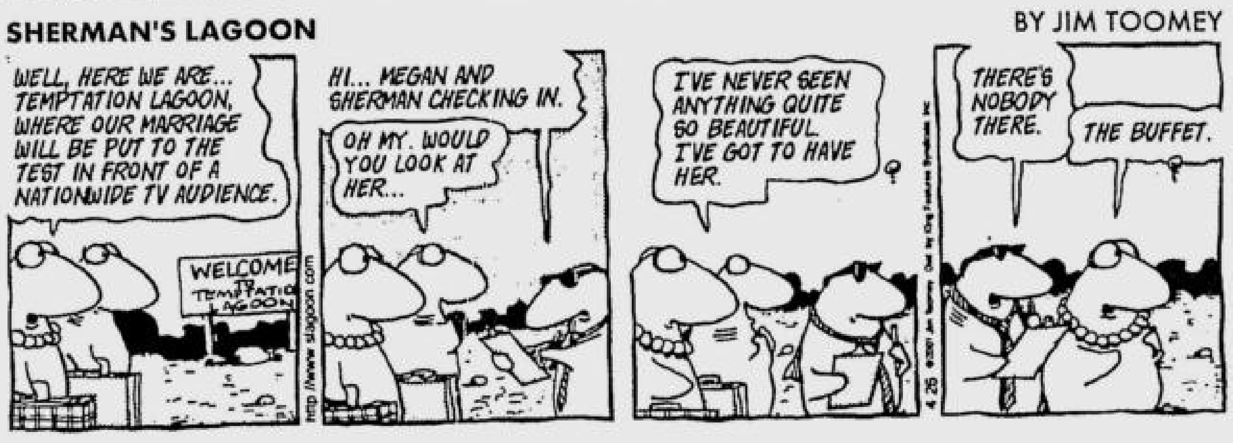
WHO ARE YOU CALLING BIG MOUTH!
Wagner

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


WELL, HERE WE ARE... TEMPTATION LAGOON, WHERE OUR MARRIAGE WILL BE PUT TO THE TEST IN FRONT OF A NATIONWIDE TV AUDIENCE.
WELCOME TO TEMPTATION LAGOON
HI... MEGAN AND SHERMAN CHECKING IN.
OH MY. WOULD YOU LOOK AT HER...
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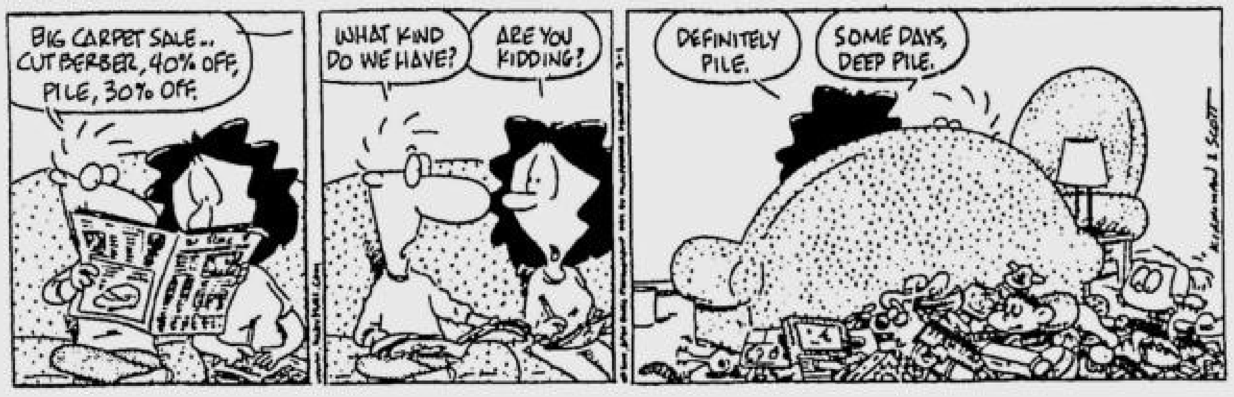
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING QUITE SO BEAUTIFUL. I'VE GOT TO HAVE HER.
THERE'S NOBODY THERE.
THE BUFFET.

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT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WHAT KIND DO WE HAVE?
ARE YOU KIDDING?
DEFINITELY PILE.
SOME DAYS, DEEP PILE.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Queen Victoria, Roseanne Cash, Bob Dylan, Priscilla Presley, Tommy Chong, Patti LaBelle, Ivan Capelli, Jane Byrne

Happy Birthday: You will have to multitask this year in order to take advantage of all the opportunities that are within your reach. Your speed and accuracy will be a winning combination as you delve into projects. Your brilliance and ability to plug away even in the darkest hours will be your salvation, along with your relentless drive to succeed. Your numbers: 10, 17, 26, 31, 44, 48

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll be receptive to new ideas. Friendships will develop into serious partnerships. You need to act quickly to take advantage of the opportunities around you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Get those deals in writing. You'll have no problem with financial contracts. It is wise to finalize contracts as quickly as possible. You must concentrate on putting yourself in a key position.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep your thoughts to yourself. Your emotional instability will cause you to say things you'll regret later. Passion, not arguments, should be your focus. Don't neglect loved ones.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Someone is likely to misinterpret you if you aren't perfectly clear about your intentions. Focus on what you are doing if you don't want to make mistakes or experience mishaps.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Don't be afraid to voice your opinion. Your intuitive words will instill confidence in others. Perhaps you should be looking into teaching. You need to be in a position of power.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Don't limit yourself by bending to demands put on you by family members. Take care of your own needs first. If you're not happy, you can't please others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): You need a change of scenery. Travel for business or pleasure and break up the monotony. Take some time for yourself. The knowledge you'll gain will be satisfying and give you some incentive.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Someone you work with may be jealous. Keep your thoughts and intentions to yourself. You'll advance if you stick to your work and do a good job.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your emotional well-being may be in jeopardy if you have avoided confrontations. Settle in and prepare to listen to your mate's needs and complaints.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Stay put and focus on projects that don't require much travel or communication. Expect delays or problems with shipments, mail or equipment. Be prepared to make alternate choices.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Join self-awareness or fitness programs that offer motivation. You need a little push to get yourself back on track. If you look good, you'll be much happier with yourself.

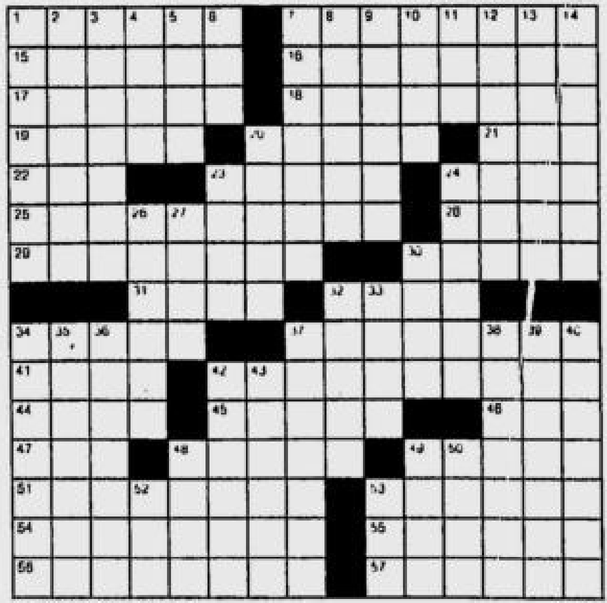
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You will have problems with someone you live with. Try to be patient, but don't let him or her take advantage of your good nature. You have to draw the line somewhere.

Birthday Baby: You have something to say about everything. You participate in life and will always get involved in whatever interests you. You have a versatile mind and the ability to find solutions.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS
1 Northern Ireland
7 Pacified
15 Rugged mountain range
16 Residents on the Ringstrasse
17 Conclusion
18 Chant
19 Abrupt transitions
20 Goes out with
21 Tourist's guide
22 Have a meal
23 Distributor element
24 Location
25 Stability
28 Dregs
29 Hearings
30 Most unfavorable
31 Place for a chapeau
32 Run smoothly
34 Open to view
37 Elevation standard
41 City on the Arno
42 Toothpaste
44 Nosegay
45 Like college walls
46 Hot-dog wrapper
47 Cheer for the toreador
48 Forays
49 Unit of capacitance
51 Judicial punishment
53 Easter event
54 Captivates
55 Noted speaker
56 Most inclined
57 Recluses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By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH
4/7/01

DOWN
1 Serving no purpose
2 Striped
3 Tranquilizes
4 Stumble
5 European white-tailed eagles
6 Tattered cloth
7 Flies
8 Painted ponies
9 Lorre and O'Toole
10 Slaughter in Cooperstown
11 Columnist Landers
12 More sordid
13 Contents of wills
14 Most profound
20 Metaphysical poet
23 Public disorder
24 Not so fast
26 Off the right path
27 Japanese legislature
30 Jack Nicholson film
32 Outdoor festivals
33 The best __ plans...
34 Takes issue with
35 Vehement
36 Intrinsic nature
37 Most derogatory
38 Oscillate
39 Neighbor of Peru
40 Usurers and loan sharks
42 One of the Lennon Sisters
43 Ousts
48 Harvest
49 Gambler's card game
50 Islands off Galway
52 Definite article
53 __ Pot of Cambodia

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	T	A	G	■	M	A	N	E	■	S	I	G	M	A
I	S	T	O	■	O	P	A	L	■	E	R	R	E	D
F	A	L	L	O	V	E	R	T	H	E	S	I	D	E
T	R	I	F	L	E	■	C	O	O	S	■	P	I	P
■	■	■	E	D	I	T	■	N	O	S	W	E	A	T
H	E	I	R	■	N	E	T	■	P	T	A	■	■	■
A	I	D	■	S	T	E	A	D	■	A	C	H	E	D
D	R	O	P	T	O	T	H	E	G	R	O	U	N	D
J	E	L	L	O	■	H	O	L	E	S	■	G	O	A
■	■	■	O	P	T	■	E	T	A	■	P	O	S	Y
H	A	R	D	W	O	N	■	A	R	N	E	■	■	■
A	R	U	■	A	T	O	M	■	E	N	E	S	C	O
S	I	N	K	T	O	N	E	W	D	E	P	T	H	S
A	T	T	I	C	■	O	A	H	U	■	E	L	A	L
T	H	O	T	H	■	S	L	O	P	■	D	O	D	O

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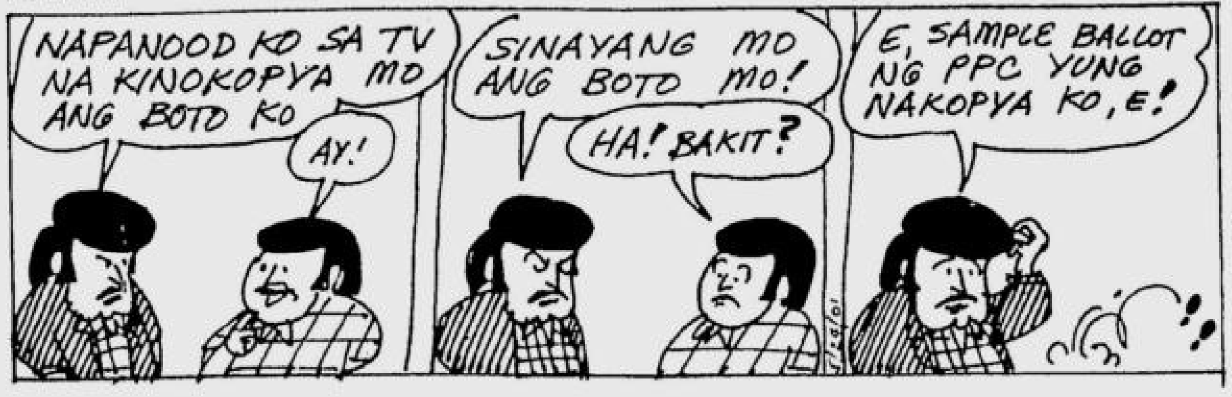
4/7/01

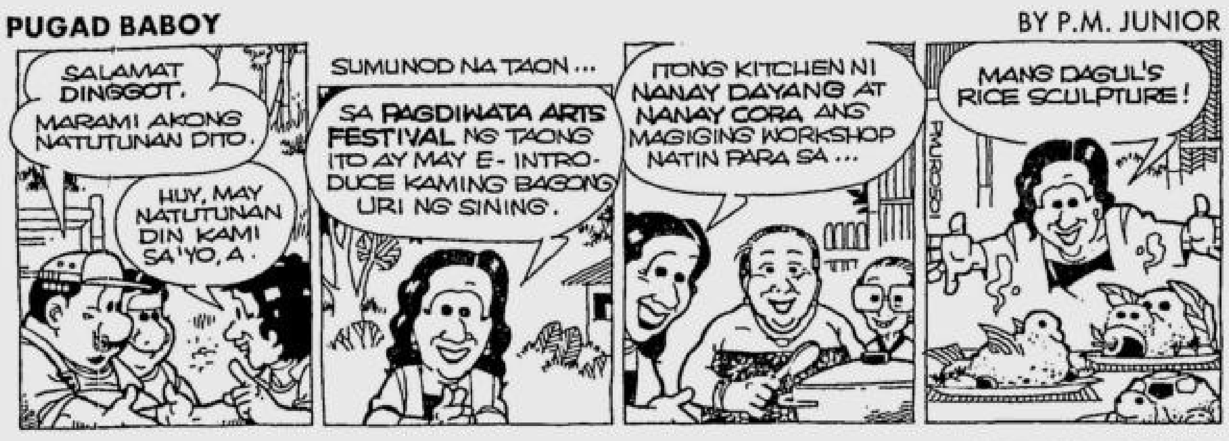
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


NAPANOOD KO SA TV NA KINOKOPYA MO ANG BOTO KO
AY!
SINAYANG MO ANG BOTO MO!
HA! BAKIT?
E, SAMPLE BALLOT NG PPC YUNG NAKOPYA KO, E!

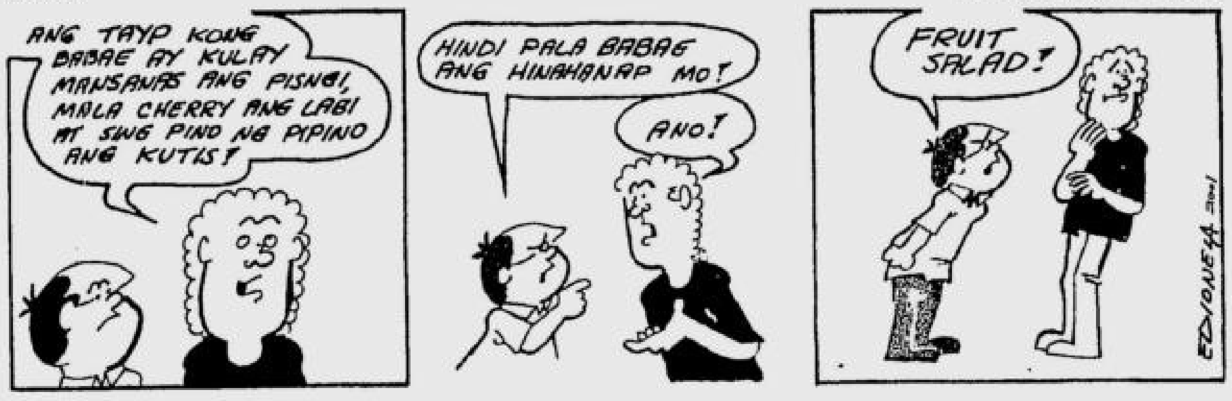
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SALAMAT DINGGOT.
MARAMI AKONG NATUTUNAN DITO.
HUY, MAY NATUTUNAN DIN KAMI SA'YO, A.
SUMUNOD NA TAON...
SA PAGDIWATA ARTS FESTIVAL NG TAONG ITO AY MAY E-INTRODUCE KAMING BAGONG URI NG SINING.
ITONG KITCHEN NI NANAY DAYANG AT NANAY CORA ANG MAGIGING WORKSHOP NATIN PARA SA...
PMJR2001
MANG DAGUL'S RICE SCULPTURE!

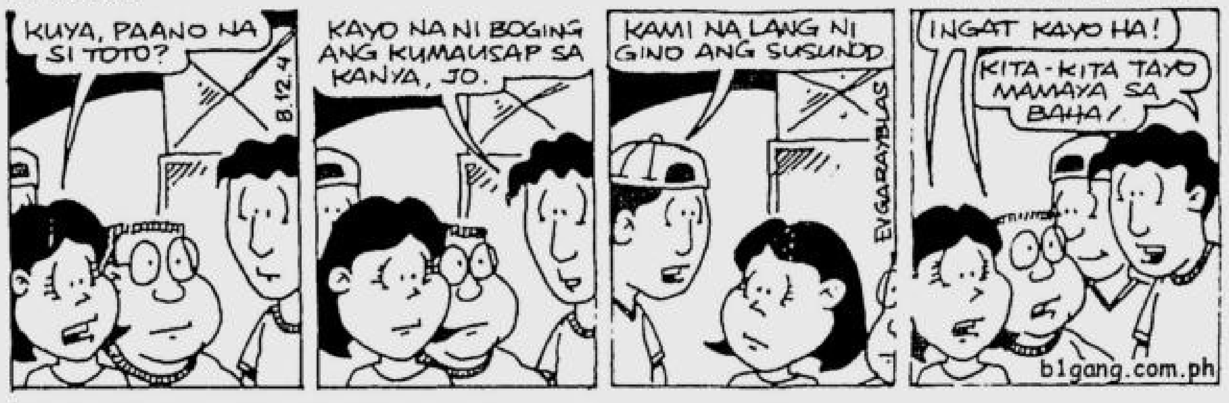
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


ANG TAYP KONG BABAE AY KULAY MANSANAS ANG PISNGI, MALA CHERRY ANG LABI AT SING PINO NG PIPINO ANG KUTIS!
HINDI PALA BABAE ANG HINAHANAP MO!
ANO!
FRUIT SALAD!
EDIONELA 2001

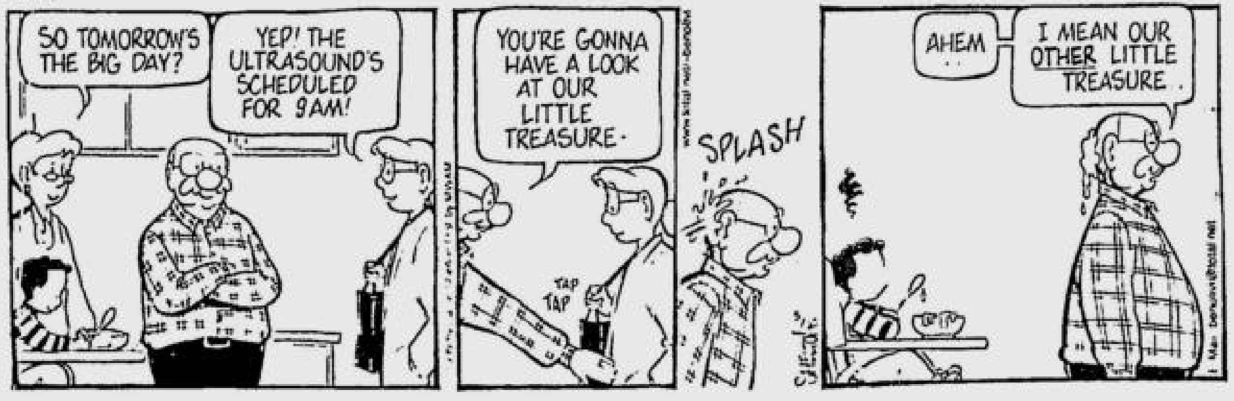
B1 GANG

BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


KUYA, PAANO NA SI TOTO?
8.12.4
KAYO NA NI BOGING ANG KUMAUSAP SA KANYA, JO.
KAMI NA LANG NI GINO ANG SUSUNOD
EVGARAYBLAS
INGAT KAYO HA!
KITA-KITA TAYO MAMAYA SA BAHA!
b1gang.com.ph

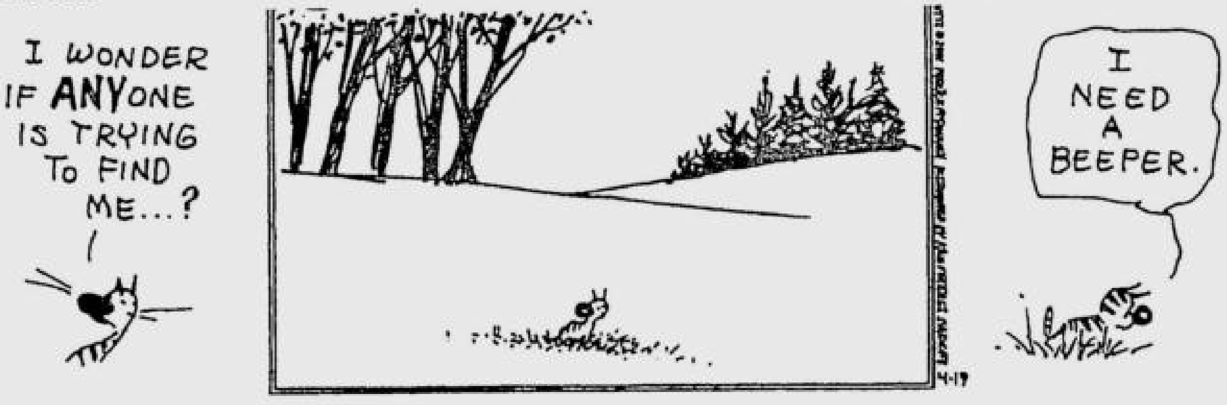
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


SO TOMORROW'S THE BIG DAY?
YEP! THE ULTRASOUND'S SCHEDULED FOR 9AM!
YOU'RE GONNA HAVE A LOOK AT OUR LITTLE TREASURE.
TAP TAP
SPLASH
AHEM
I MEAN OUR OTHER LITTLE TREASURE.

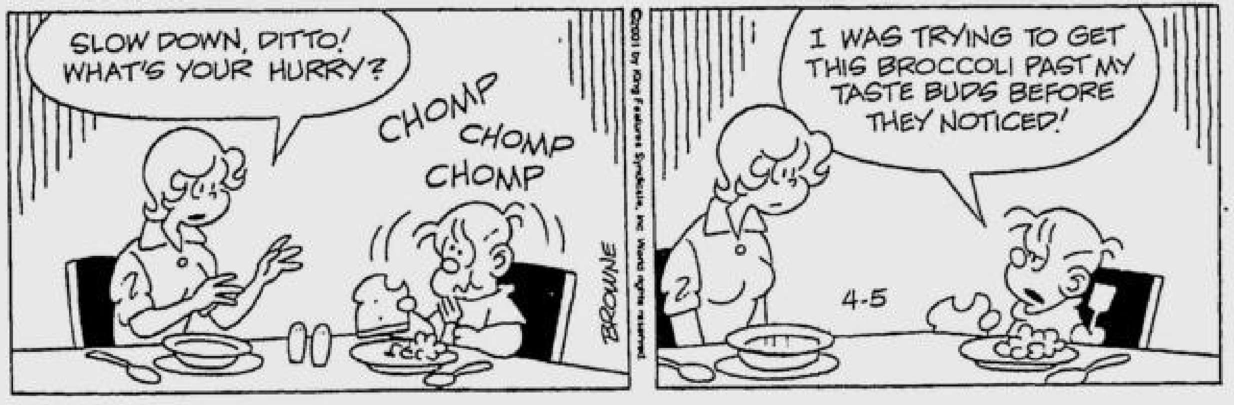
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I WONDER IF ANYONE IS TRYING TO FIND ME...?
I NEED A BEEPER.
4-19

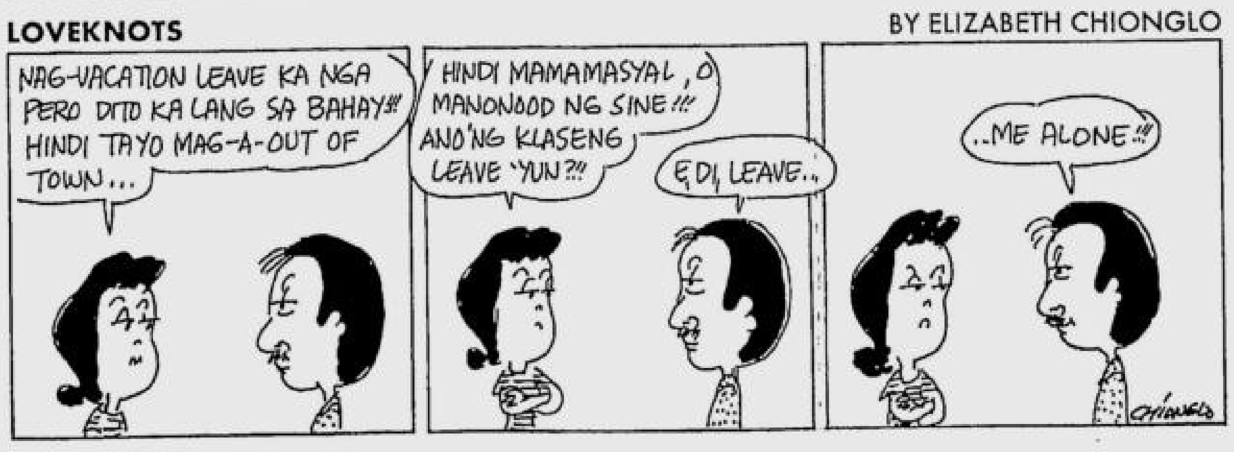
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


SLOW DOWN, DITTO! WHAT'S YOUR HURRY?
CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP
BROWNE
I WAS TRYING TO GET THIS BROCCOLI PAST MY TASTE BUDS BEFORE THEY NOTICED!
4-5

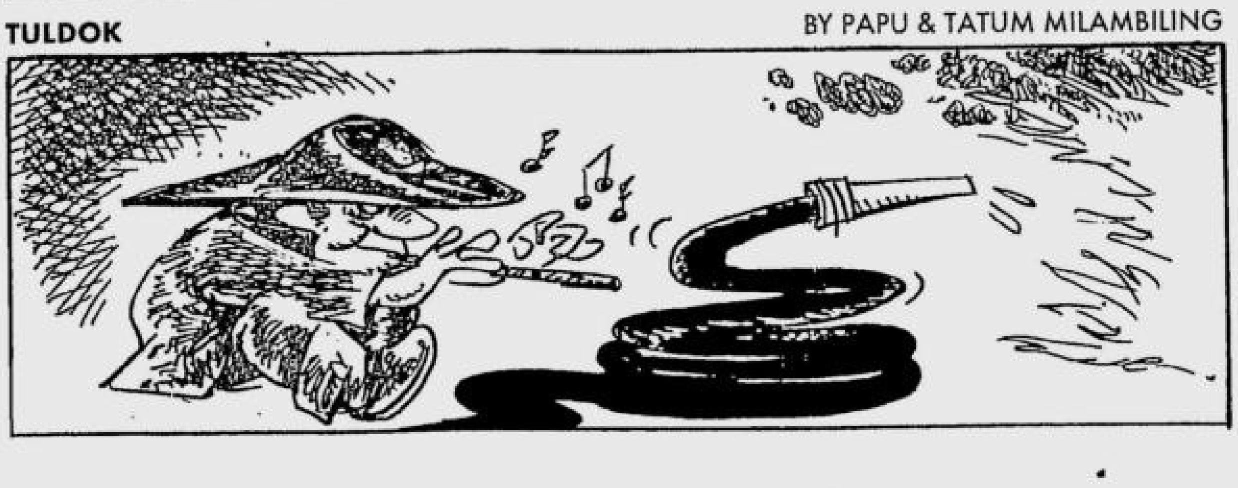
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NAG-VACATION LEAVE KA NGA PERO DITO KA LANG SA BAHAY!!! HINDI TAYO MAG-A-OUT OF TOWN...
HINDI MAMAMASYAL, O MANONOOD NG SINE!!! ANO'NG KLASENG LEAVE 'YUN?!!
E, DI, LEAVE..
..ME ALONE!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING



Wrapping up a birthday with 'lumpia' and laughter

CELEBRATOR JuD Lao

(From page C8)

chopsticks (she gave us each a plastic disposable set), not wooden disposable ones, so that you don't help decimate the forests.

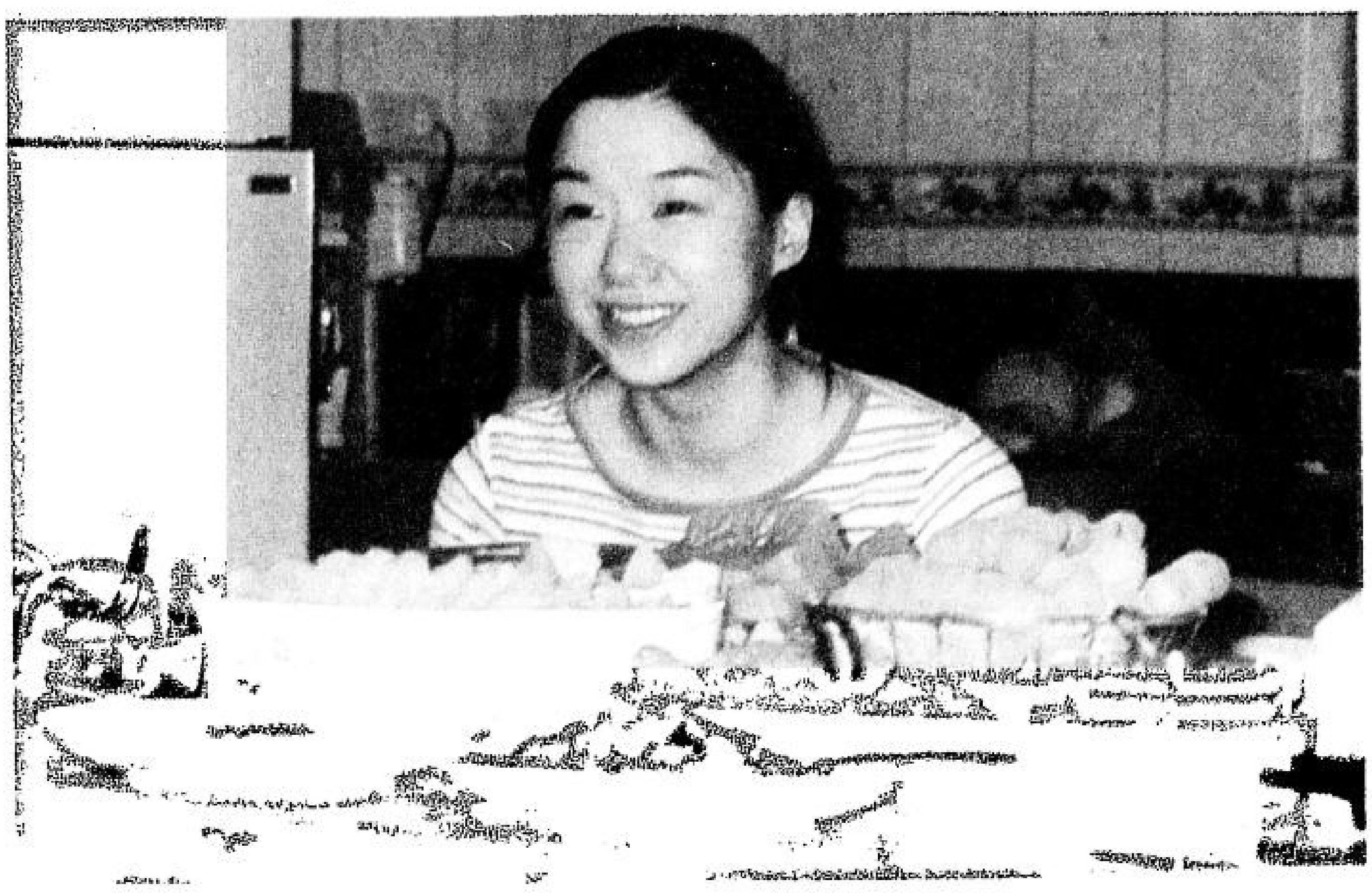
So much to give

JuD had learned much of this from her family, from her Taiwan friends and from her Dhama Master Cheng Yen. It was a delicious meal, presented in a stately, elegant ritual—informal enough to occasion many stories and much laughter.

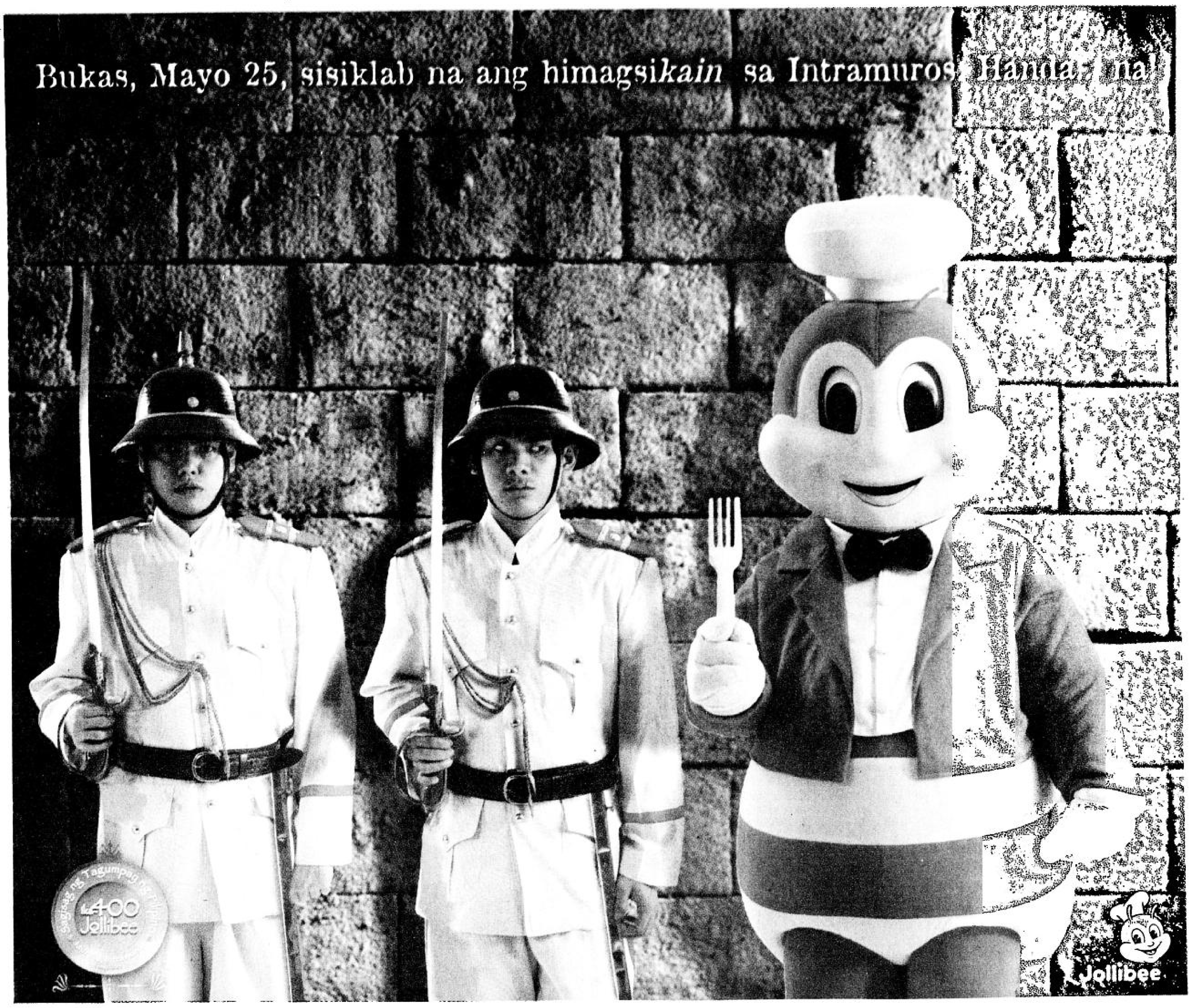
"Learn how to cook; take over," JuD told her daughter. "I want to retire." And what would she do when she retired? Why, draw cartoons, of course—humorous line drawings that she already has on a calendar. Also compose music, she added. JuD has been making her wonderfully packaged fruitcakes since 1975, and feels she now has retirement rights.

But she has, of course, so much to give—beyond *lumpia* lunches. I was overwhelmed by and grateful for the experience. We wished there had been more people at the table than just the five of us (including my nurse Winnie) to share the bounty. Husbands, brothers and friends were called, but no one was available for the Monday noontime grace.

Bless JuD and all others who mine their treasured traditions and share them with friends, so that the food of history may go forward, alive in the present, to enrich the future.



JAMIE Lao, JuD's daughter, and the fruit buffet


Bukas, Mayo 25, sisiklab na ang himagsi*kain* sa Intramuros. Handa na!
Sagisag ng Tagumpay ng Pilipino
400 Jollibee
Jollibee

Watch Super Movies
in Sucat on May 25

IED conducts study for RP jewelry exporters

THE INSTITUTO Europeo di Design, or European Institute of Design (IED) based in Rome, Italy is giving a big boost to the exports of Philippine-made jewelry when it recently conducted a design study for five major Philippine jewelry manufacturers.

Ilios Jewellers, New Life Jewellery, Oro Y Plata, 7 Castles and AurumAlliance are the first jewelry companies in the Philippines and in Asia to sponsor and participate in this project of the Philippine jewelry industry and IED. The project was conceived by Italian jeweler Giuseppe Troisi, board director and chair of the Education Committee of the Guild of Philippine Jewellers, Inc (GPJI) and managing director of Ilios Jewellers Subic. According to Troisi, one of the reasons Philippine jewelry has been having difficulties in the export market is the lack of modern design appeal.

GPJI, in its efforts to bring the country's jewelry industry to a competitive level with neighboring countries, pursued the project in its working agenda under Troisi's Committee. The Philippine jewelry industry and IED are engaging themselves for the first time in a complex activity of cooperation and exchange of ideas and information assimilating the geographical background, identities, art and cultures of two continents, Asia and Europe.

The project was proposed to Philippine Ambassador to Italy Philippe Lhuillier, a former jeweler who readily accepted the idea. Lhuillier's enthusiastic response made the government a major sponsor of the initiative, setting the stage at government level for the project's immediate implementation. The project is seen to make Philippine jewelry globally competitive and successfully penetrate the rich European market, a significant step towards making locally made jewelry known in the world.

Under a written agreement, IED undertook a special teaching program for their students under which the participating companies became case studies and specific lines of new collections exclusively designed for each company. Upon the group's return to Italy, the institute's second and third year students will be working on the project for about two months. The final phase is the official presentation in Italy and in the Philippines to highlight the results of the studies and to present the new lines of jewelry prepared in cooperation with the individual companies to be marketed around the world under each company's names and logos.

IED is the most popular and successful institution in Europe today, producing most of the continent's successful professionals in jewelry design, communication, photography, fashion and furniture.

SIRCRO GUEST SPEAKER

The Society of Realtors (Sircro), during a luncheon meeting held at the Ayala Tower, had as guest speaker Carlos S. Rufino, senior vice president for commercial operations, Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation. Rufino presented the site developments and two new projects in the area--Pacific Towers and Bonifacio Ridge. Shown with Rufino (third from left) receiving a gift of appreciation from Sircro president Arnold Canaria of Filinvest Land are Nigel Lucas of Colliers Jardine, Chito Zaldarriaga of Carmelray Industrial and Eric Mangosing of RCBC Plaza. Sircro, organized in 1980, is a guild of top realty practitioners dedicated to the promotion of knowledge and ethical standards.

Clips

Jaycee senators host annual golf tourney

VALENCIA

CALLING the attention of all Jaycee Senators. The Metro Manila Jaycee Senate led by 2001 president JCI senator Sergie Valencia is once again hosting its annual golf tournament at the Club Intramuros on May 26, Saturday. Tee off times are from 7 a.m. to 12 noon. Now on its 4th year, this tournament is being held for the benefit of the Settlement House Orphanage of Plaza Dilao, Paco, Manila. Golf Tournament Committee chair Mark Dayrit aims to create a fun tournament that will renew camaraderie among senators. Following the event is an awards and fellowship night to be held at the Kayumanggi Café of Club Intramuros at 6 p.m. The evening will be filled with food, drinks, entertainment and raffle prizes. Grand prize is a complete, brand new golf set from the United States. All Philippine Jaycee senators are invited and encouraged to participate in this yearly affair. Come join and reminisce the nostalgia of your Jaycee days. For inquiries, call Maricar at the Golf Tournament committee office at 848-7137 to 45.

German Foundation new regional office

THE CARL Duisberg Gesellschaft e V. (CDG), a German non-profit organization specializing in advanced professional and international training, celebrates the transfer to its new regional headquarters this Friday, May 25 at room 407 Cityland 10 Tower II Condominium, 6817 Ayala Avenue, Makati City. The new office coincides with the arrival of the new CDG Asean regional coordinator, Dr. Peter Mueller-Rockstroh. This occasion will also give recognition to the ongoing cooperation between the CDG regional office and the Carl Duisberg Association of the Philippines (CDAP), the alumni association of former CDG scholars to Germany; in implementing development projects locally and in the region.

Freestyle at Partyplace

CATCH Freestyle when they perform at Partyplace May 25. It is considered the best concert arena at Pampanga. It also has a superb menu that will satisfy even the most discriminating palate. Go and check out this hot spot at Dolores, San Fernando, Pampanga, and have an ultimately fabulous time. For details, contact CTO Advertising at 912-8983 or Jon at (0918) 902-1954.

Screenwriting workshop, take 2

Jun Lana, seven-time Palanca Awardee, will once again share his expertise in a screenwriting workshop on Saturday, May 26 at the Bahay ng Alumni, University of the Philippines, Diliman. Jun Lana is the critically acclaimed screenwriter of "Sa Pusod ng Dagat," "Muro-Ami" and "Jose Rizal." He is also the former head-writer of "May Himala" and currently the head-writer of "Kasangga" and "Kakabakaba" at GMA 7. Lana will not only lecture but will also conduct hands-on training through writing exercises. For reservations, call Mavic of On-Line Video Workshops at 412-78095 or 412-9312 or visit www.on-linevideoworkshops.com.

QCCCI video rental seminar

The Quezon City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCCI) and the Quezon City Small and Medium Enterprises Development Council (SMEDC) will conduct a livelihood seminar on how to set up a video rental shop on May 26 and 27. The seminar starts 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Penthouse of Citimotors Building located at Pasong Tamo corner Don Bosco Streets, Makati City. The seminar is designed for entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs. Participants will learn through lectures and discussions, handouts, demonstrations and audio-visual presentation. For further information, get in touch with the QCCCI office at room 301 Agustin Building, 139 Malakas Street, Diliman, Quezon City or call 434-9937 and look for Marivic or Stephanie.

Bakery association celebrates 35

VITAL issues on health, nutrition, hygiene, sanitation and environmental quality management will be among the main concerns of the Filipino-Chinese Bakery Association Inc. (FCBAI), the premier organization in the country's baking industry, as it celebrates its 35th anniversary with the theme, "Healthy Bread for Life." FCBAI president Gerry T. Chua hopes to underscore the need to develop full awareness on these issues through seminars and workshops that will be conducted during the Bakery Fair 2001 from May 25 to 27 at the Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City. The FCBAI president also announced it is coming up with a first-ever souvenir yearbook. All interested parties are invited to sign up in the FCBAI directory at 1967 Rizal Avenue, Sta. Cruz, Manil[illegible] can also call [illegible]-2518 for more information.

QNHS Class '91 reunion

QUEZON National High School Class '91 will hold a reunion on Saturday, May 26, at the QNHS Gym, Lucena City. Old Enverga High School will be the assembly point at 8 a.m. for the motorcade. Registration follows at the QNHS Gym. For more information call Dave Tan at 710-3310 or 0917-4315227, Arlene Alvarez at 0919-3410844, Hezil Nerpio at 0919-6265235, Rhodalyn Quimora at 0917-6195739 or visit Moggies Botique near Sacred Heart College and look for Monaliza Basit.

CommAsia 2001

TELECOMMUNICATIONS, BROADCAST, ELECTRONICS, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & E-COMMERCE

LEN DELOS REYES, Account Manager
SPROJECTS@INQUIRER.COM.PH
ARIES B. ESPINOSA, Assistant Editor

GMA opens crucial tech event

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo opens CommAsia 2001 today at the World Trade Center.

CommAsia 2001 is the exhibition which will gather all sectors involved in the industry of information communications technology namely, telecommunications, broadcast, electronics, information technology and e-commerce. Macapagal-Arroyo said CommAsia 2001 will contribute much to our nation's bid to be a major player in the international IT, telecommunications and electronics industry made more significant with the inherent advantage of our country in terms of highly skilled, professional and trainable human resource.

CommAsia's opening ceremonies will be graced by the presence of top government officials, leaders of the private sector as well as the diplomatic corps. With the President during the historic opening ceremonies are DOTC Secretary Pantaleon D. Alvarez; DTI Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino; MTC Commissioner Eliseo M. Rio Jr.; US Embassy Charge d' Affaires Michael E. Malinowski; US Embassy Counselor for Commercial Affairs George F. Ruffner and Robert Bannerman, commercial attaché, US Embassy; Philippine Telecommunications and Electronics Federation (Petef) president Rodolfo A. Salalima; and IIR Exhibition (IIR) director for the Far East, Patrick Lawrence Tan.

CommAsia 2001 will feature more than 214 local and international participants from 18 countries occupying over 5,200 sqm of space in World Trade Center. It will feature a US Pavilion. The event will be highlighted by product presentations, conferences, seminars, government and industry forum with prominent industry personalities as speakers. The exhibition will be held coinciding with the National Electronics and Telecommunications Week (NETW).

CommAsia is a joint project of Petef and IIR which can be contacted at 750-8588.

CommAsia 2001
Telecommunications · Broadcast · Electronics · Information Technology · E-Commerce

VISIT the most comprehensive Information Communication Technology event in the country

✓ Over 5,000 sq.m. exhibition space
✓ Total of 214 exhibitors from 18 countries
✓ International group participation
✓ Product presentations, conference and seminars
✓ Government and industry forums

May 24-26, 2001
Exhibition Hours: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
World Trade Center
Metro Manila Philippines

Held coinciding with the National Electronics and Telecommunications Week (NETW)

Free Entrance! Persons below 18 years old will not be allowed inside the exhibition hall.

Official Pavilion by: U.S. Commercial Service, United States Embassy
A joint project of: Philippine Electronics and Telecommunications Federation · IIR Exhibitions

For further information, contact the organizer at: IIR Exhibitions Philippines Inc.
Unit 1003, Antel 2000 Corporate Center
121 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
Tel. (632) 750-8588 · Fax (632)887-1305
Email: jingiirxp@skyinet.net

For pre-registration, visit our website at: www.commasia.org and www.jimac-inc.com

Free Admission to the Conference & Seminars!

SCHEDULE OF CONFERENCE
May 24, 2001
THEME: S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS OF THE INDUSTRY
1:30 pm Roundtable Discussion
1:45 pm Industry Strengths
2:00 pm Industry Weaknesses
2:30 pm Industry Opportunities
2:45 pm Industry Threats / Challenges
3:00 pm Wrap up and Open Forum

SCHEDULE OF SEMINARS
May 24, 2001 (Thursday)
11:00 - 12:00nn "Integrating Your Business Through the Internet" by: Eastern Telecoms
1:00 - 2:00pm "TNT Global Logistics Solutions-Storapart" by: TNT International
2:00 - 3:00pm "Internet Traffic Management Solutions" by: Leverage Systems Technology
3:00 - 3:30pm "Content Distribution & Delivery Network (Streaming Technology)" by: Infolibria c/o Intex Telecoms Systems
3:00 - 4:00pm "Critical Power Protection Systems & Solutions" by: MGE-Ups Systems Phils. Inc.
4:00 - 4:30pm "Building Futures with NetworkPlace" by: Getronics
5:00 - 5:30pm by: IBM Philippines
5:00 - 6:[illegible] "Open Software & Cabling Systems" by: Automation & Security Inc.
6:00 - 6:30pm "Buy USA.com" by: U.S. Commercial Service

May 25, 2001 (Friday)
10:00 - 11:00am Ascendas: "Asia's Foremost Business Space Solutions Provider Is Here in the Philippines" by: Acendas (Phils.) Corp./JTC
10:30 - 11:00am "Internet Traffic Management & Content Delivery Network" by: F5 Networks c/o Intex Telecoms Systems
11:00 - 12:00nn "Redundant Parallel Architecture Fact or Fiction!" by: Victron
11:30 - 12:00nn "Intelliwhere" (Geo-Space & Location-Space In Fixed & Wireless Industry: Multi-Dimensional Solutions) by: Intergraph Systems South-East Asia Pte. Ltd. (IGSEA)
12:00 - 1:00pm "Overcoming Barriers of Rural Telephony" by: Q-Telecel
1:00 - 1:30pm "Fiber Optic & Copper Cable Splice Cases" by: Preformed Line Products
1:00 - 2:00pm "e-Pay: The Prepaid Solutions" by: E-Pay Asia Philippines
2:00 - 2:30pm "Lyncole XIT Grounding System" by: Globaltek
2:00 - 3:00pm "E-conference" by: Solid Video Corporation
3:00 - 3:30pm "iPlanet" by: Sun Microsystems
3:00 - 4:00pm "Cabling Solutions for the Future" by: Brand Rex (Microwarehouse)
3:30 - 4:00pm by: Sun Microsystems
4:00 - 4:30pm "Deployment of Fiber Infrastructure for Optimum Network' (Flexibility In High Capacity Backbone & Access Networks) by: Tyco Electronics Phils., Inc.
4:00 - 5:00pm "Cost Effective Interactive White Board" by: Board Meeting Inc.
5:00 - 5:30pm by: IBM Philippines
5:00 - 6:00pm "The Web Crisis Today" by: On-Line
6:00 - 6:30pm "Buy USA.com" by: U.S. Commercial Service

May 26, 2001 (Saturday)
10:00 - 11:00am "High Availability DC Solutions for your Business Needs" by: American Power Conversion
11:00 - 12:00nn "What Should I Know About IBOC" (In-Bond on-Channel AM/FM Digital Audio Broadcasting) by: Active Comm
1:00 - 1:30pm by: Kinetic Solutions
1:00 - 2:00pm "Communication Solution through Technology" by: DB International
2:00 - 2:30pm by: Molex Premise Networks
2:00 - 3:00pm "Work & Play with AV" by: Audio Visual Driver
3:00 - 3:30pm by: Porta Systems
3:00 - 4:00pm "Wireless Broadband: Powering the Future of Data Communication" by: Meridian Telecom
4:00 - 4:30pm by: Wireless Inc.
4:00 - 5:00pm "Alert Me Now! Your Messaging Companion" by: 25*8
5:00 - 5:30pm by: IBM Philippines
6:00 - 6:30pm "Buy USA.com" by: U.S. Commercial Service

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IIR Exhibitions, world-class organizer behind CommAsia 2001

COMMASIA 2001 is organized by IIR Exhibitions Philippines Inc. (IIR), a member of the London-based Institute for International Research Group together with the Philippine Electronics and Telecommunications Federation (Petef). The IIR Group, one of the world's leaders in exhibition business conference, information technology training and business information publishing, is an independent, privately owned company with an international network of 192 business units in 26 countries.

The IIR Group worldwide currently organizes trade events in the United States, United Kingdom, France, Poland, Germany, Netherlands, Hong Kong, UAE, Egypt, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines. This year alone, IIR's network is organizing a total of 400 telecom events around the world.

IIR in the Philippines has organized more than 140 trade events by 2000. It is also known for organizing highly professional events of the company's competent staff and over 100 years of solid experience. For 2001, IIR will hold 13 international trade exhibits occupying over 25,000 square meters of total floor space at the World Trade Center.

The exhibits include, in addition to CommAsia 2001, the following: Communications & Automation Cebu 2001, June 28 to July 1 at the Cebu International Convention Center at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel; Manufacturing Cebu 2001 incorporating Woodmach Cebu 2001, June 28 to July 1 at the same venue; Graphics Asia 2001, Phil Print 2001, Packaging Philippines 2001 featuring Food Technology Expo 2001, Plastics Philippines 2001 and Total Retail Industry Fair 2001 incorporating Retail Equipment and Technology Expo 2001, Gifts and Premium Expo 2001 and Franchising Expo 2001, Sept. 19 to 22 at the World Trade Center.

Philtronics 2001 incorporating Componex Philippines 2001, Semiconductor Philippines 2001 and PCB Assembly Philippines 2001 and Instrumentation and Controls Philippines 2001 incorporating Pumps and Valves Philippines 2001, Oct. 10 to 12 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila; Jewellery 2001 and Hardware and Tools Asia 2001, Nov. 29 to Dec. 2 at the World Trade Center. IIR may be contacted at 750-8588 and fax 750-8585.

US has largest country pavilion

COMMASIA 2001 will feature a U.S. Pavilion, the largest country pavilion, with 15 U.S. companies participating to display their products and services.

The US Pavilion gives impetus to BuyUSA.com, the official US government website offering business-to-business (B2B) platform one can trust when conducting business with the United States.

BuyUSA.com was created by the US Commercial Service and IBM Corporation to connect overseas business customers with US suppliers of goods and services. Its goal is to offer the full spectrum of business matchmaking and transactions at one location. From BuyUSA.com one can gather company and product information, arrange live or virtual meetings with suppliers, shop for payment and financing alternatives, and make the final insurance and shipping arrangements.

BuyUSA.com was created with the highest security standards available--those of the US government. All secure information is transferred using the most modern encryption software, and sensitive information is stored behind state-of-the-art firewalls. Even BuyUSA.com has no legal access to transaction information. Only information that you wish to make public appears in the BuyUSA.com data bank.

BuyUSA.com combines cutting-edge information technology from IBM, the confidence of a US government service, and a worldwide network of local trade professionals to offer you an ideal e-commerce connection to the United States.

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CommAsia 2001 exhibitors

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MESSAGE

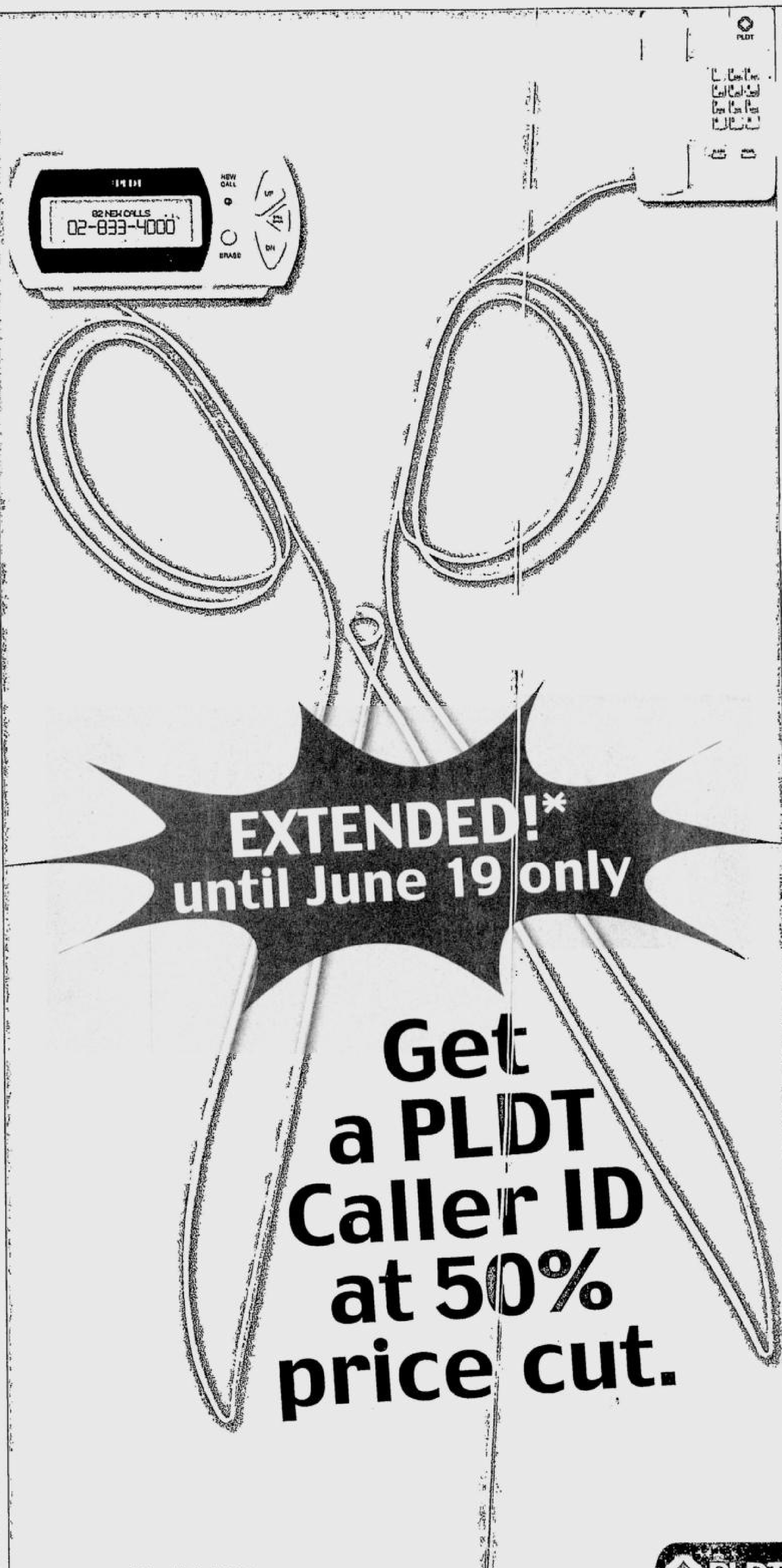
MY MOST cordial greetings to the organizers, sponsors and participants to "CommAsia 2001" as they hold this international exhibition.

The holding of various trade and industry expositions, exhibits and conventions are undeniable manifestations of an economy's viability. This gathering in particular is of paramount interest for we have placed the development of information technology, communications and alike among the key sectors in our agenda for sustainable development. Like our neighbors in Asia, we hope to maximize the potentials of this still evolving sector and boost the competitive edge of our industries and enterprises.

With our country's inherent advantage in terms of a highly skilled, professional and trainable human resource, events like this contribute much to our nation's bid to be a major player in the international IT, telecommunications, and electronics industry. It is thus my hope that this exhibition will pave the way in fostering vital linkages between and among stakeholders in this area and secure its impressive growth over the recent years. Together, Asian economies shall have a better chance to emerge successful in this highly dynamic field of information technology and telecommunications that is shaping today's economies and societies.

I wish the fruitful culmination of this event. More power and mabuhay!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines



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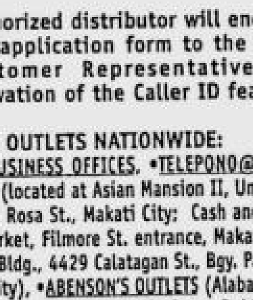

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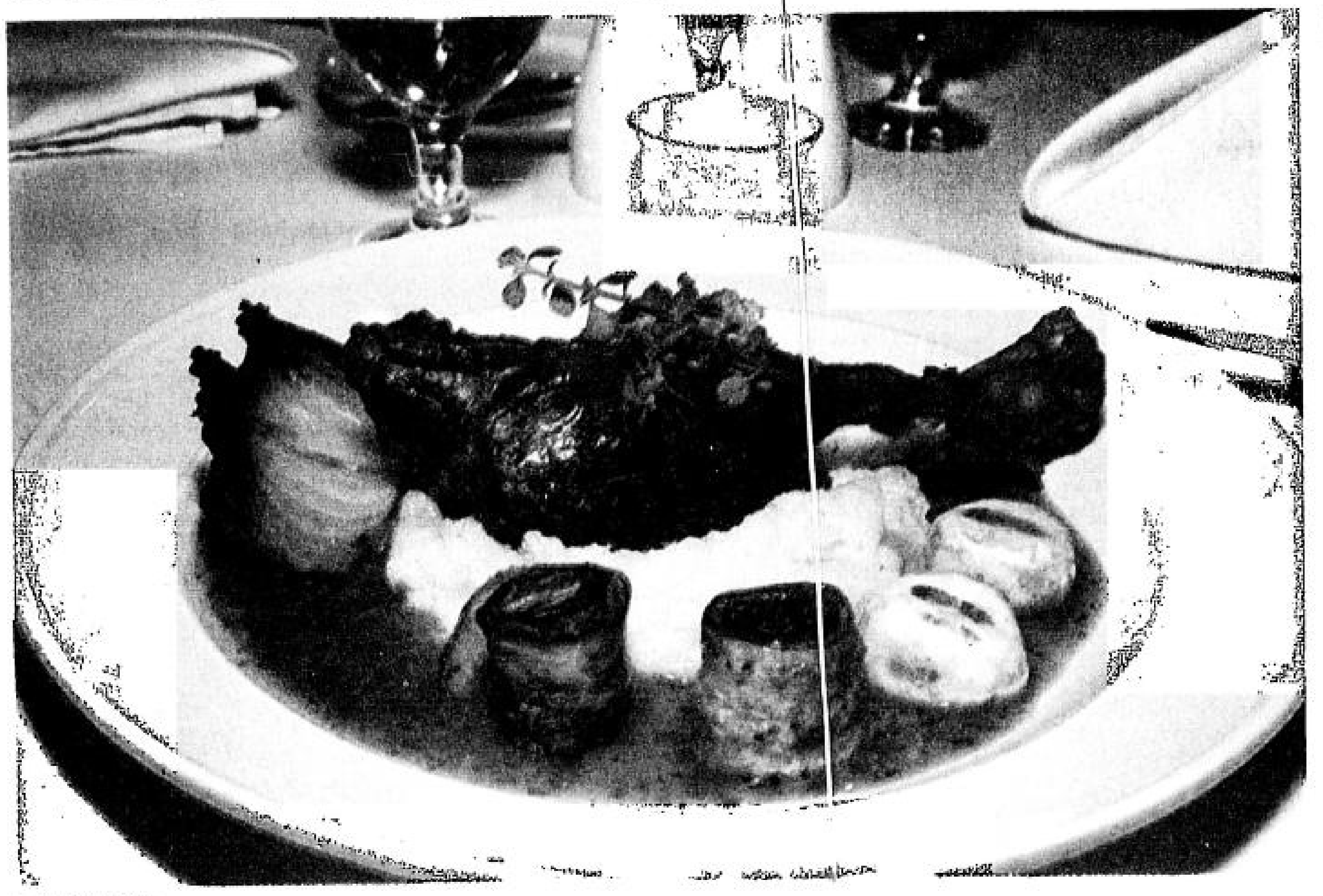
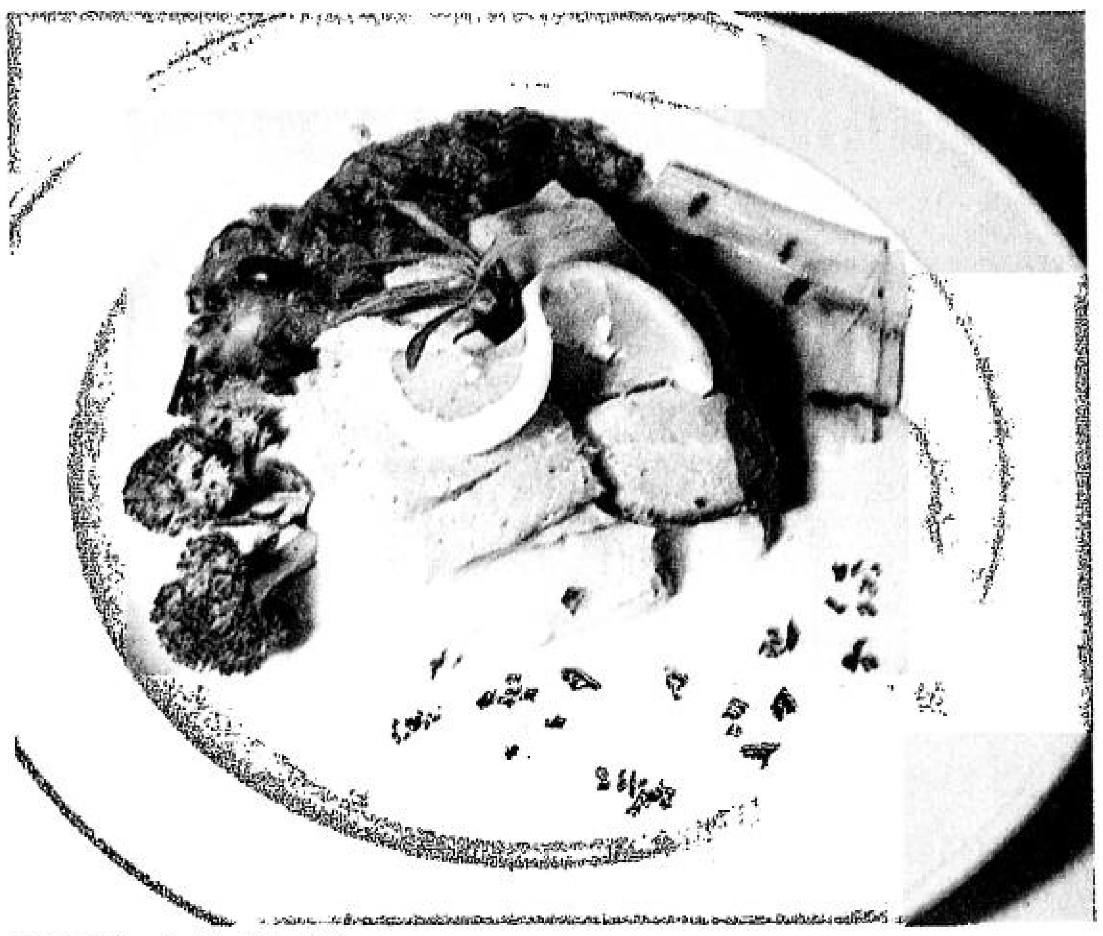


LAMB shank



SALMON and white fish with two sauces

Back to the classic

(From page C1)

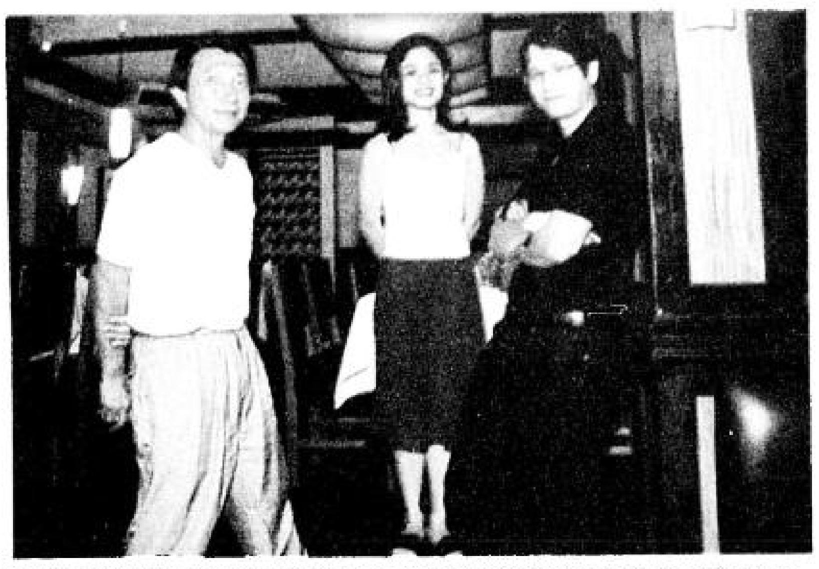
rice (P455) is definitely a healthier alternative to duck meat. Again, the chef has come up with an ideal sauce, which is made from a blend of port wine and tasty chicken stock. Pieces of mushrooms, asparagus and apples garnish the grilled chicken breast.

The secret is in the sauce

"The trick is to make a particular flavor stand out by making the dish pure and simple," says Llamado. "I never resort to fancy ingredients and combinations to conceal the taste. Using MSG is a definite no-no."

The pan-fried sole mauniere (P285) is a classic example. Rather than tinker with an already perfect piece of fish, Llamado does it the French way, by working on the sauce and manner of presentation. In fact, every dish he prepares is a work of art that looks too good to demolish. This time fish fillet is artfully served on a plate of mashed potato drenched in clarified butter sauce, garnished with asparagus, grilled leeks and sprinkled with herbs.

Llamado is able to bring out the juicy lamb shank's (P340) natural flavor by simply braising it before serving it with a plate of mashed potato and a "classic" blend of mint sauce. He garnishes it with grilled button mushrooms, onions, broccoli and two pieces of eggplant rolled like strips of bacon.



THREE'S COMPANY. Louie Llamado, Vanessa Yap and Joey Camara

Two for the price of one

"This is a fine dining restaurant," adds Camara, "but our servings won't leave you feeling hungry or cheated." By combining certain ingredients with certain sauces, Llamado also gives diners the chance to savor two dishes for the price of one.

For the salmon and white fish with two sauces (P325), he pairs grilled salmon and sole with hollandaise and a combination of tomato and mushroom sauce. Several pasta dishes also come with a pair of sauces: shrimp and pesto; tomato and bacon with anchovies; and baked macaroni with smoked salmon. Then there's the pigeon and chicken with berry sauce and foie gras (P420), consisting of grilled half-boneless pigeon and chicken in brown sauce and butter, grapes and preserved black cherries.

The restaurant also takes pride in their desserts, consisting of freshly baked cakes and in-house ice cream in vanilla, chocolate and strawberry.

Yap says they bake their cakes only upon order. "The cake tends to become dry if baked too early," she explains, "so we decided to bake it fresh. It's a good combination of hot (cake) and cold (ice cream)."

STRAWBERRY shortcake

Despite their attempts at "no-nonsense" approach to fine dining, the trio has come up with an intimate place made cozier by its unfinished white walls, bleached wooden posts and checkerboard floors.

Black-and-white photos of various ceilings of churches and buildings by US-based Filipino photographer Jay Campos hang on the walls. Interestingly, the ceiling above the smoking section and the elevated non-smoking area also draws attention.

On typical days, jazz and big band music from Camara's French and American CD collection fills the entire hall. A wooden bar serves a selection of French and Chilean wines. After all, what's a French restaurant without wine?

"I love wines," says Camara. "We have a lean-and-mean wine list, so nothing [costs] beyond P2,000 per bottle."

If your taste runs along classic French food and cozy ambiance and you look at price points as well, Le Mécène is just *le* place for you.

E-mail the author at avergara @iquirer.com.ph

Reinventing the Spanish wine

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE APOSTLES of wine share a round table of the most exalted bottles of the world. They are dubbed Primum Familiae Vini, an association of wine-owning families that "often produce very little but always of excellent quality and great personality."

This select and exclusive group of 12 (the statutes say there can never be more than that) includes: Rothschild, Müller, Drouhin, Pol Roger, Hugel, Symington, Jaboulet, and, in Spain, Vega Sicilia and Torres.

Three years ago, when wine master and Decanter columnist Michael Broadbent was asked who would he list as the world's top vintners and winemakers, he replied: "Unquestionably Miguel Torres and Angelo Gaja. But also Henri Jayer in Burgundy and Wilhelm Weil in the Rheingau."

Two years ago, Wine Spectator executive editor Thomas Matthews wrote: "Ernest Gallo and Robert Mondavi in California, the Torres family in Spain, the Rothschilds in Bordeaux, Antinori in Italy—these are family-led operations willing to take risks for quality, and put their own reputations on the line to back their products."

In 1979, the Torres family's Gran Coronas Reserva1970 won in the *vins rouges* category of the Gault-Millau Wine Olympiad in Paris, creating a sort of scandal for defeating the Grand Vin de Château Latour, which came second, and Château Haut-Brion, which came fourth. (A sour-graping Latour official dismissed the Spanish interloper as fit only for "a bawdy night out.")

Of the 22 selections that year, another Torres wine, Coronas (86-percent Tempranillo, 14-percent Cabernet Sauvignon), was ranked No. 7.

In 1997, Torres 20 won the gold trophy for the Best Worldwide Brandy at the International Wine and Spirit Competition in London. This intense, velvety and lush brandy (from the grape varieties Parellada and Ugni Blanc) has been distilled twice in copper pot-stills and aged in new Limousin oak barrels.

SEÑOR Miguel Torres

Not bad for a produce from Spain, which used to be known for its cheap wines of mostly indifferent quality. Now Spain, according to Wine Spectator, is "arguably the most exciting wine region in Europe." Doubtless, the Torres family has played a major role in pushing the country to its present place among the wine nobilities.

Very crisp apéritif

In 1999, Wine Spectator gave the Readers' Choice Award to Bodegas Torres as the most important winery in Spain, and ranked it No. 1 among the leading wine firms in the world.

Wrote editor Matthews: "Torres stands preeminent among Spain's wineries for its fruitful combination of deep roots and unceasing innovation. The family has grown grapes in Catalonia since the 17th century, and the company, founded in 1870, now produces more than two million cases of wine from 2,300 acres of grapes throughout the Penedès region, around Barcelona... The Torres family now owns wineries in Chile and California, and is considering expansion in China."

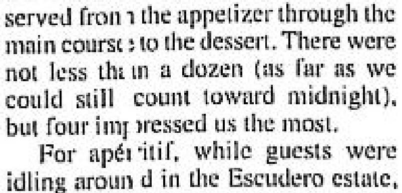
Last week, Señor Miguel Torres, president of the company and "the reinventor of the Spanish-wine concept," visited the country to strengthen his company's ties with its Philippine distributor, ATR Wines & Spirits. A degustation from lunch to dinner was held in his honor at Villa Escudero in Tiaong, Quezon.

Some may sour-grape, but these wines from Spain are among the noblest and sweetest in the world

It was an intense experience, as numerous varieties of Spanish wines, traditional, noble or *reserva*, were served from the appetizer through the main course to the dessert. There were not less than a dozen (as far as we could still count toward midnight), but four impressed us the most.

For apéritif, while guests were idling around in the Escudero estate, nibbling on nuts, baked green shells and sundried-tomato pizza, an excellently chilled and very crisp Viña Esmeralda was served.

It is a fine wine (85-percent Moscatel, 15-percent Gewürztraminer) that has been cold-fermented in stainless-steel vats. One of the very rare wines capable of accompanying artichokes, says a note on it bottle, it is perfect with avocado and seafood cocktail, paté, sweet-and-sour dishes, any type of fish, melon with ham.



JAIME I Brandy Gran Reserva

Pale yellow with a green tinge, it is fresh, crisp and elegant on the palate, with intensely fruity and floral aromas and flavors of passion fruit, ripe banana, peach blossom, honeysuckle, rose and jasmine, an appealing hint of spices, and an aftertaste reminiscent of green apples.

Shocking drinks

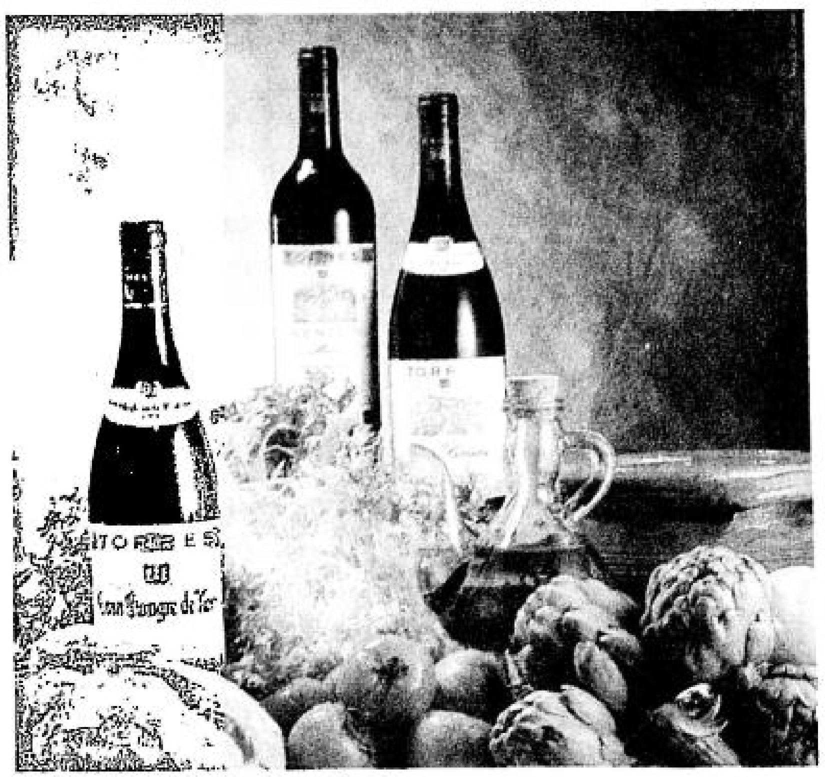
Certainly the most impressive was Mas La Plana, a Cabernet Sauvignon fermented in stainless steel under controlled temperature, then aged for 18 months in casks of new French Nevers oak. It was served during the main course of roast leg of pork with mushroom gravy, beans and carrot bundles, home-fried potatoes.

Considered Spain's best Cabernet, it has a dark cherry color, a flavor hinting of dark fruit jam enriched with soft touches of smoke and spices, a voluptuous density, extraordinary structure, smooth tannin, and an aftertaste that's intense. (Later we found out this is the famous Black Label, which has since been renamed, the very same Gran Coronas Reserva 1970 that defeated those haughty French wines.)

Moscatel Oro was served with *pandan* cake, fresh cut fruits such as mango, cantaloupe, watermelon. It was a shock, as while sipping it we couldn't make out whether we were savoring lychees or crème brûlée.

This golden dessert wine has a sticky sweetness and the seductive scents of rose, geranium, lemon, verbena. The palate is voluptuous, concentrated but light, broad and delicately sensual. It's lovely if you drench your slice of *pandan* cake or cantaloupe with it, before spooning the food to your mouth.

The after-dinner drink came as another shock. Jaime I is the sweetest brandy we've ever encountered, a delicate convergence of wine and liquor. It tastes more like fortified wine than a distillate. We didn't know such a brandy existed.



MORE wines from the Torres family

But then this is no ordinary *aguardiente*. To complement its intense aroma with lighter fruity and floral notes, the white Parellada aged in American oak (the oldest being 30 years) has been added with a small amount of eau de vie of Folle Blanche lees, "the noblest and rarest of grapes." The result is a deep, rich brandy of dark amber, with a complex concentrated bouquet, silky on the palate.

This is the Reserva de la Familia. As if to underscore that fact, its bottle was designed by Antoni Gaudí. A more voluptuous and, yes, gaudier version of Picasso's spiraled Pepsi Cola bottle, it is a noble vessel fit for the soul of wine.

By twos

More wines and spirits came one after another, often by twos, sometimes all at once. Sangre de Toro came with Gran Viña Sol, for instance, though we can't remember at which part of the dinner they were served.

Served with shrimp-macaroni-pineapple salad and fish croquette in tartar sauce with capers were Fransola and the California wine Marimar Torres Chardonnay.

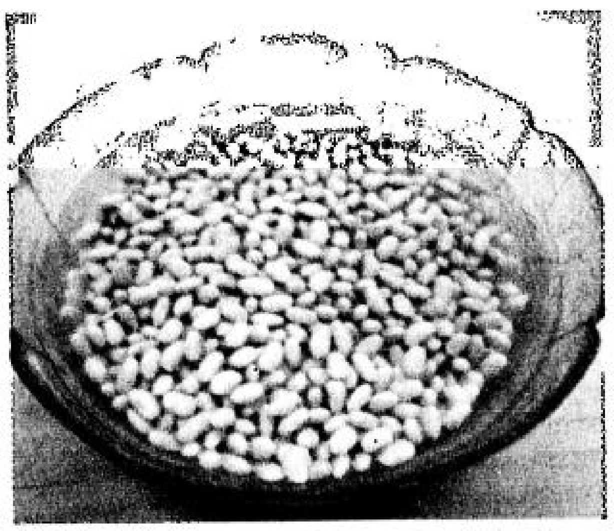
During the main course, Mas La Plana was served together with Grans Muralles, an exotic wine made from ancient Catalan grape varieties (Monastrell, Garnacha Tinta, Garró, Samsó, Cariñena).

After the main course, two Chilean wines, the aristocratic Manso de Velasco and the sensual Cordillera, were served with that extraordinary cheese Queso Manchego (ripe and hard, almost translucent, very tasty, leaving an oily film on the fingertips).

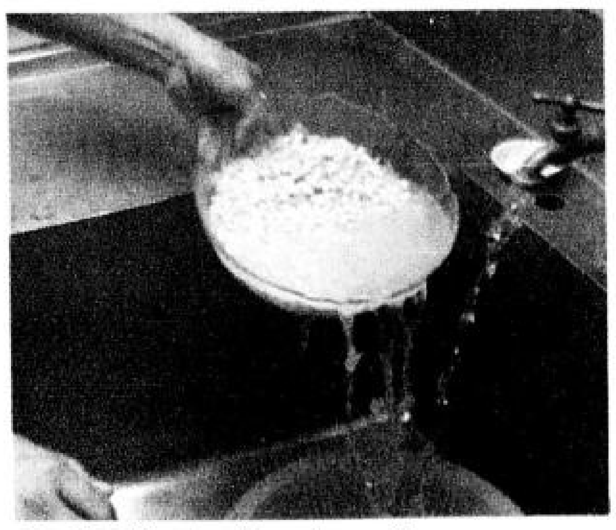
With the after-dinner coffee came the wine distillate Aqua d'Or in a tall, slender bottle, served together with the curvaceous bottle of brandy (the pairing looked almost sexual).

Obtained from recently fermented white wines by direct distillation using medieval techniques, Aqua d'Or has retained in its aroma the fruity richness of those wines. If Jaime I tastes almost like vintage port, this one would be *fino* sherry, bone-dry and crisp.

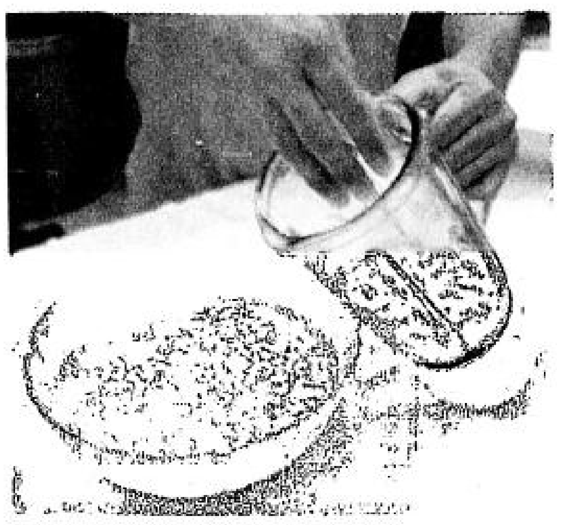
Toward midnight, we were so satiated with wines and spirits we could barely distinguish the *tinto* from the *blanco*, much less Merlot from Garnacha. But then every tasting seemed to culminate in a powerful and voluptuous finish, as each flavor became a fragrant memory.



1 SOAK soybeans in a bowl of cold water for 12 hours.

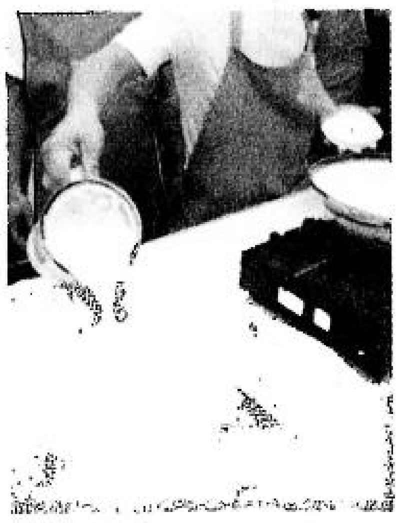


2 DRAIN water with soybean skin.



3 PUT two cups of soybeans in a blender.

4 ADD four cups of water and blend well.



5 PLACE a clean white cloth over a bowl and drain the soybean purée.

Sweeten up your day with taho

BY VANGIE BAGA-REYES
PHOTOS BY JOHNNY VILLENA

MOST of us don't outgrow the smooth, syrupy *taho* of our childhood. We eat it for breakfast and snack on it in the afternoon. In short, we have a hard time resisting it.

Taho, a soybean milk with sweet syrup and chewy *sago* bits, was once peddled around town by Chinese merchants. Today, *taho* remains a staple in Chinese restaurants. However, instead of using *arnibal* (brown sugar) as sweetener, the Chinese use ginger syrup as part of the flavoring and it makes for a nutritious dessert.

Now, you can enjoy the goodness of *taho* right where you are and when you want it as Archie Au, manager of Peking Garden, teaches us how to make this soya-based favorite the traditional Chinese way. "The process of making *taho* is quick and simple," assures Au. "Even kids can do it." Peking Garden usually serves this all-time favorite Chinese dessert hot after a full lauriat meal.

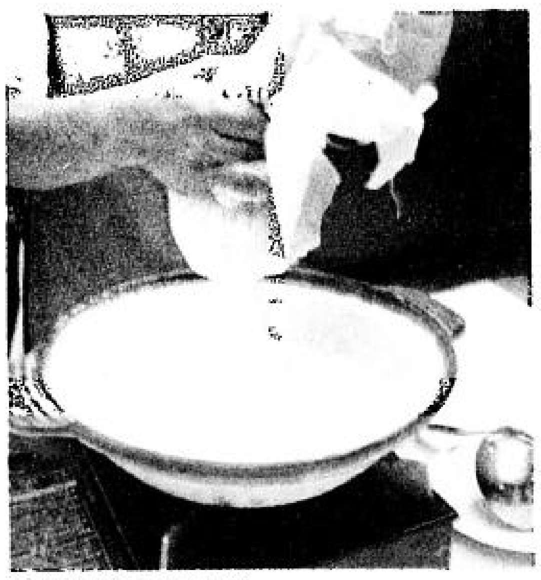
Soybeans, the main ingredient in this recipe, are available in most supermarkets and wet markets. For ginger syrup, all you need are slices of ginger and Chinese rock sugar. Simply boil water with ginger and Chinese rock sugar for a few minutes until the sugar dissolves. The quantity of water and rock sugar depends on the degree of sweetness you desire. The rock sugar, which looks like a crystallized solid rock, can be bought at Chinese drugstores and groceries in Ongpin in Binondo.

Ingredients:
600 g dried soybeans
4 tsp cornstarch
1 tsp beancurd paste

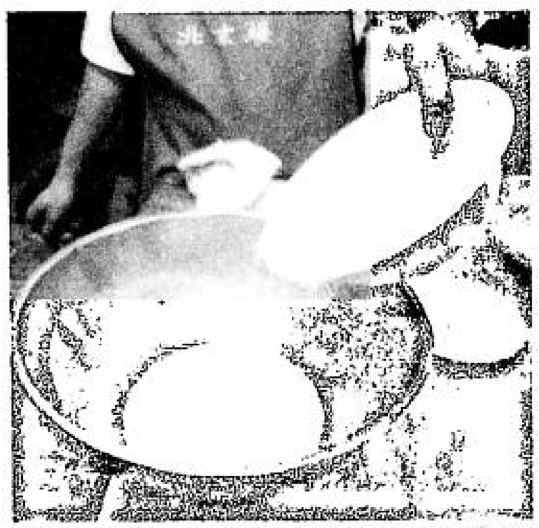
For ginger syrup:
Slices of fresh ginger
Chinese rock sugar

For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

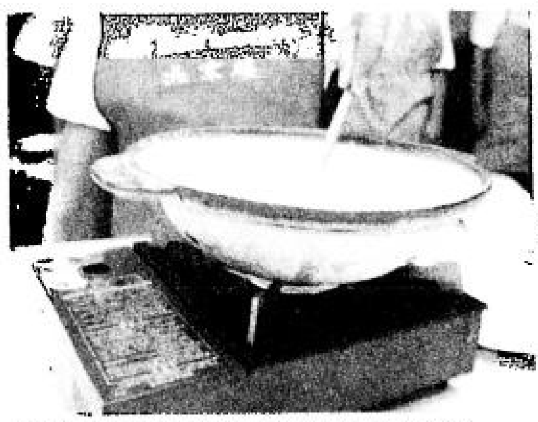
If the vendor won't teach you how to make 'taho,' we will



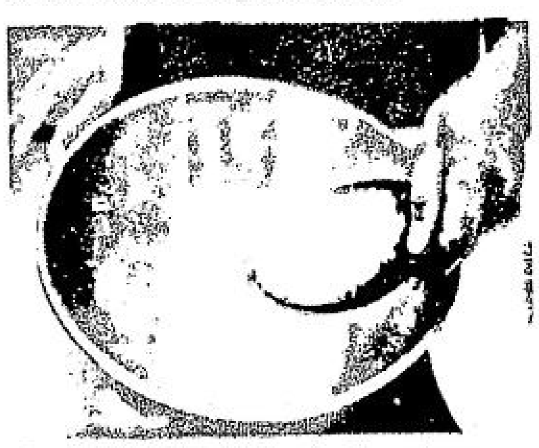
6 THEN squeeze it.



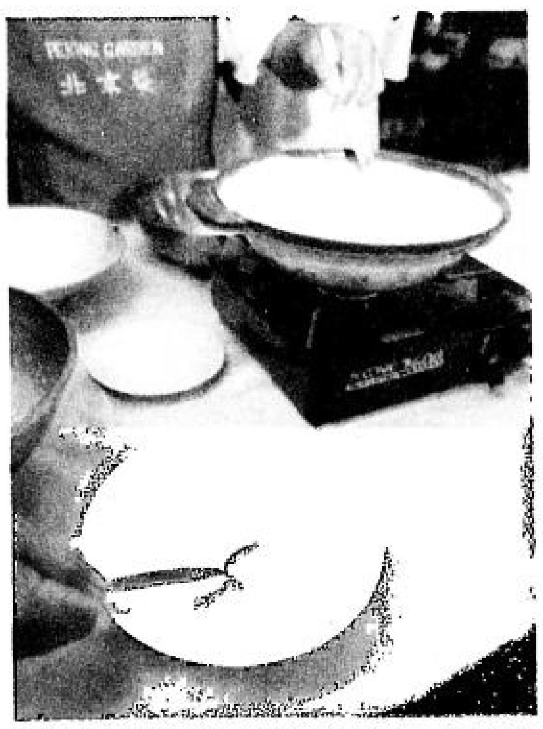
7 IN TWO separate small bowls, pour at least ½ c of the soybean cream and set aside.



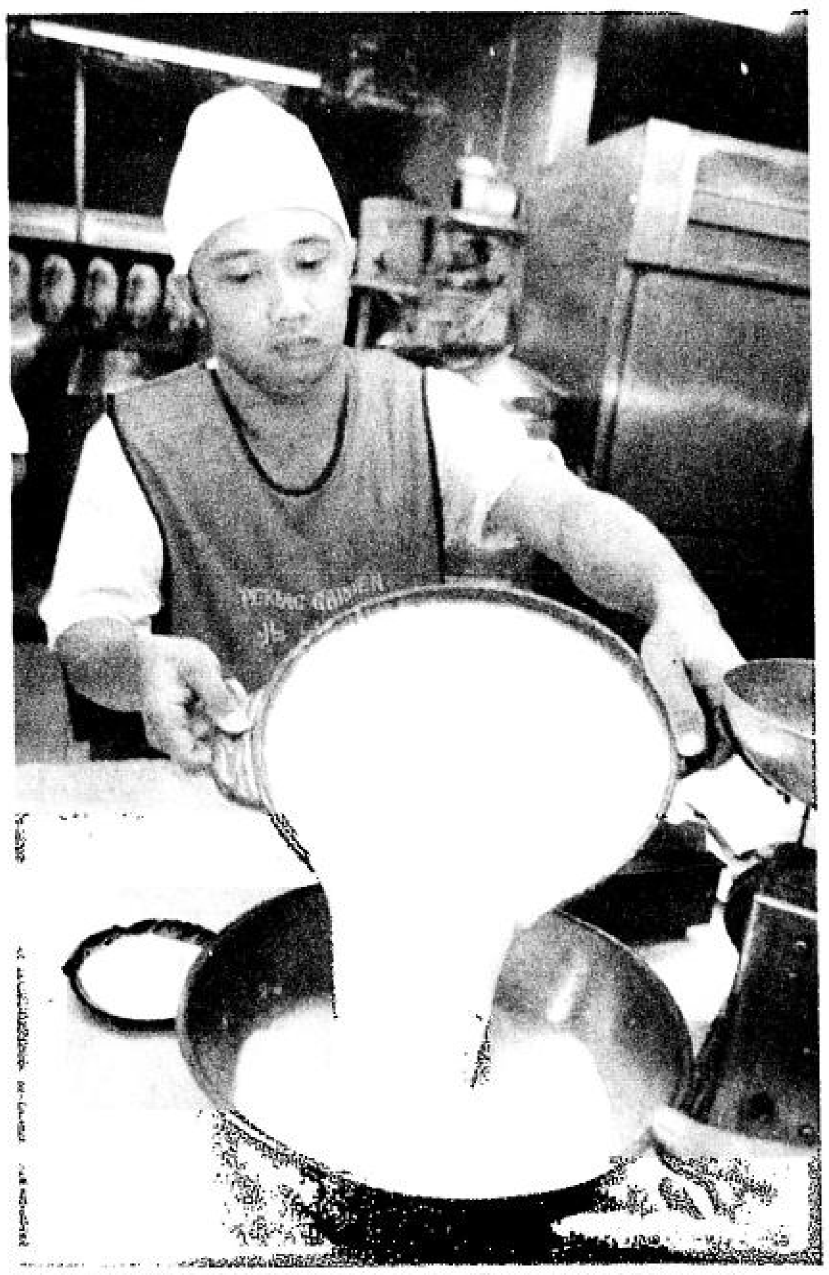
8 IN A LARGE pan, pour the remaining soybean cream, add water proportional to the cream and bring to a boil over medium heat for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.



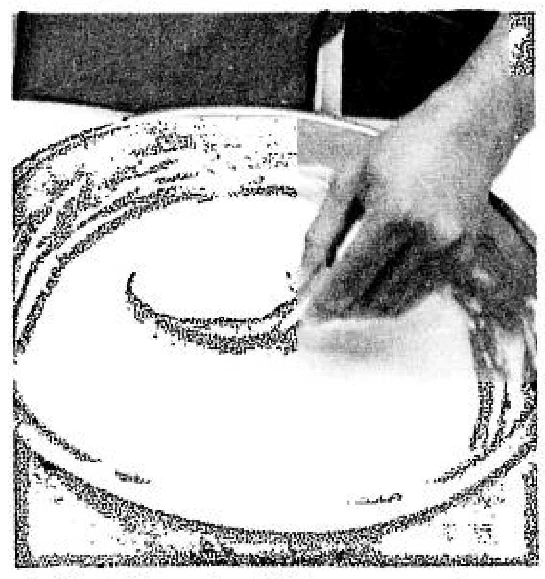
9 GET the two small bowls with soybean cream and put ½ c of cornstarch into one bowl.



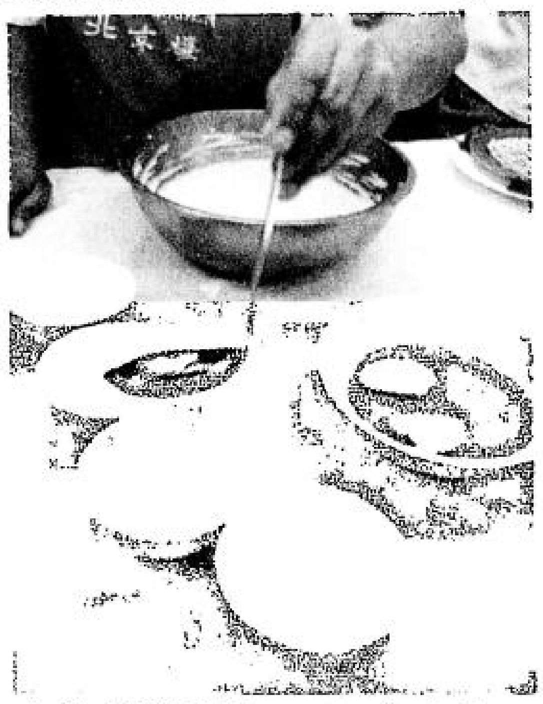
10 ADD ½ c beancurd paste in the second bowl and mix well. Then pour the two mixtures in a bigger bowl and mix again.



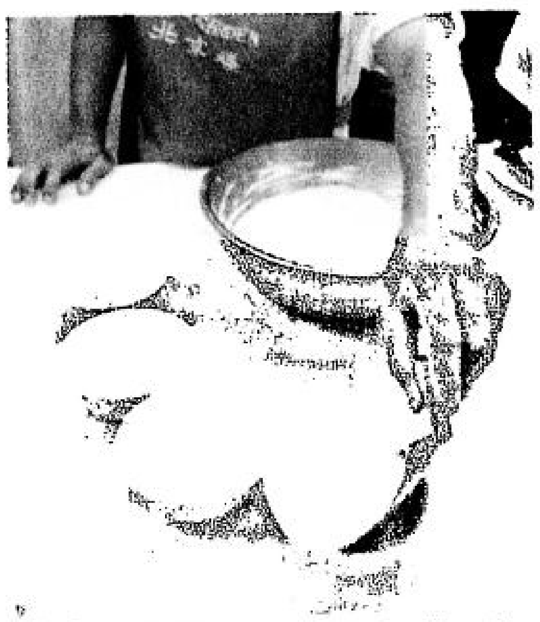
11 WHEN the cream has boiled, transfer it to the big bowl with beancurd paste and cornstarch.



12 MIX evenly until it becomes paste.



13 TO SERVE beancurd custard with ginger syrup, pour desired quantity of ginger syrup in dessert cups.



14 SCOOP beancurd custard until cup is almost filled up. Add mango balls or *sago* bits if so desired. Good for 10 servings.

15 READY to serve *taho* the Chinese way!

French cooking demo

MEMBERS of Hotel Inter-Continental Manila's Prince Albert Cooking Society and other interested parties are in for a gastronomic treat as noted French Chef Cyrille Soenen conducts a cooking class demonstration on May 29, 10 a.m., at Le Boulevardier. To be demonstrated is a three-course menu of special recipes, namely Clam Soup with Oyster Cappuccino, ButterFish Basquaise Style and Apples Flognarde.

Participation fee is P850++ per person. This is inclusive of a recipe folio, lunch at the Prince Albert Rotisserie consisting of the demonstrated menu and one beverage. The class is open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 815-9711 local 571 or 572.

Order three new dishes on the menu and the third one's price is half off

MASTER chef Tiziano Cavellini of Bravo!—the authentic Italian restaurant-bar in trendy Malate corner of Nakpil and Adriatico Streets, and at Festival Mall, Alabang—draws from his childhood memories and his years as top cook in Modena City's Fini, northern Italy's foremost restaurant, to celebrate the fiesta month.

To entice Bravo! habitues to sample the latest addition to their now-famous fare, three orders of the master chef's new creations entitles the customer to a 50-percent discount off the least priced dish.

The chef expands the toppings of his popular thin-crust pizzas, which has been voted one of the best in Manila by food magazines, with higher ingredients suited for the last days of summer. Seafood lovers will be delighted with Pizza Positano's fresh shellfish and tomatoes flavored with herbs and the Pizza Nostromo with black olives, tomatoes, mozzarella, onions and tuna. Pizza Mama Mia, something the chef learned from his mother, is sumptuous with parmigiano, mozzarella, Italian sausage, capers, black olives and lettuce.

For healthier pizzas, Della Nonna comes with a smoky flavor with its bacon, meatballs, mozzarella, tomato and parmigiano while the Pizza Parmigiana offers meat sauce, mozzarella, parmigiano and a heaping of vegetables—fresh zucchini, eggplant and tomatoes.

Pizza Genovese, a healthy and tasty concoction of fresh tomatoes and pesto oozing with mozzarella, is ideal for vegetarians.

The new pasta dishes include Spaghettini Della Nonna, an all-time northern Italian favorite with tomatoes, parmigiana, mozzarella and meatballs and Spaghettini Nostrome, a seafood sauce of tomatoes, mozzarella, black olives, onions and tuna.

The latest addition to their list of best-selling risottos is the Adriatico, which is reminiscent of the Spanish *paella* with its medley of shrimp, shellfish, pork, saffron and Italian sausage.

Fiesta favorites star in all-you-can-eat buffet

TO CELEBRATE the best of Filipino traditions, Kamayan features the Kamayan Fiesta Islands, featuring highlights of popular fiestas now included in their All-You-Can-Eat Buffet. The new menu is a celebration of Filipino culture in every dish, spanning the different regions of the country.

There are over 50 new dishes to choose from, foremost of which is the star of every fiesta banquet: Lechon de Leche. This suckling pig spit-roasted over charcoal is considered a great delicacy, and is a main favorite during fiestas.

Other dishes include Lechon Paella, Pancit Molo, Inihaw na Baboy and Chicken Pastel. Different regions of the country are represented by dishes indigenous to the place: Bicol Express, Adobong Bisaya, Pancit Molo and Morconito.

Visit any of Kamayan/Saisaki branches at Glorietta 3, Ayala Center, Alabang, Megamall, Pasay Road, West Avenue, Edsa and Padre Faura.

Bakers' fair slated at Philtrade

EXQUISITE layered cakes from some of the country's finest makers of cakes and pastries will be on display when the Bakery Fair 2001 reels off May 25-27 at the Philippine Trade Training Center, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

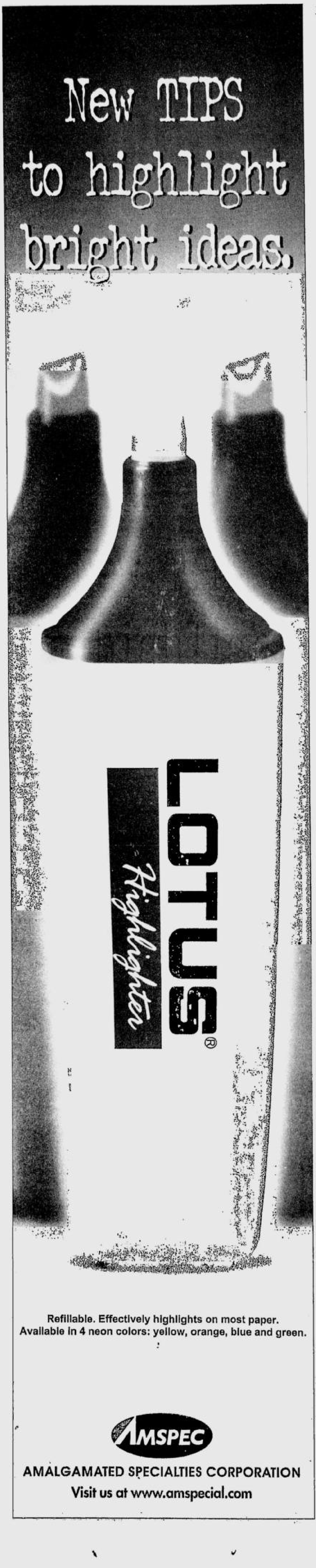
A project of the Filipino-Chinese Bakery Association Inc. (FCBAI), the three-day exhibition will be highlighted by cake presentations by Bakerite, Baker's Fair, Basix Marketing, Cinco Hermanas, Claudettes Cakes and Pastries, Kamikiss Bakeshop, Polland and Ultimate Food Corp.

FCBAI president Gerry Chua said the cake display will afford hoteliers and restaurant owners, catering service providers and consumers the opportunity to get acquainted with new design techniques and innovations in the manufacture of layered cakes for all occasions.

According to Chua, more than 130 booths and pavilions representing 60 participating organizations will showcase various supplies, equipment and tools used in the baker's trade provided by manufacturers and distributors and baking ingredients, flour, baking utilities, equipment and machinery.

FCBAI is also coming out with a souvenir yearbook to highlight this years exhibition, which is being held as part of the association's 35th anniversary celebrations.

The first-ever directory of bakers, suppliers and allied industries, interested parties may still get listed by calling the FCBAI office (tel. 254-2581) located at 1967 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila.



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IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

Fruitcake queen JuD Lao sat a few friends at her kitchen counter and served fresh fruit and the inimitable Pinoy egg rolls

CALLED *lumpia* in Indonesia and the Philippines, *popiah* in Singapore, egg roll by Americans, it is, Alan Davidson writes in "The Oxford Companion to Food," "a pervasive phenomenon of the SE Asia food scene, which has colonized some other parts of the world, e.g. the Netherlands" (*loempia*).

Filling an edible wrapper with other food, and rolling or wrapping it up is a versatile presentation of everyday ingredients. Indonesians fill it with meat and prawns, or vegetables, perhaps bean sprouts. The Dutch make it giant-size, a one-dish meal. Elsewhere, it is mainly a snack.

In the Philippines, which Davidson calls "the country where *lumpia*-making has been carried to a high pitch of excellence," it has many splendored guises. Filled with chopped pork and fried, it is *lumpiang* Shanghai; with vegetables, sometimes sprinkled with peanuts, a sweetish garlic sauce on the side and perhaps a lettuce leaf lining, it is *lumpiang sariwa*. If served without the wrapper it is *lumpiang hubad* (undressed *lumpia*).

Lumpiang ubod is filled with heart of palm, and in my hometown, Silay, Negros Occidental, the coconut trees are cut down in the morning of the making, so that the *ubod* is sweet and fresh, a great contrast to the jaunty spring onion tucked in for accent. It can also be filled with cheese sticks, parsley or other fancies, e.g. flaked *tinapa*, green mango and *kesong puti* or Cheddar cheese, as Pia Castillo and Ed Quimson have it.

Lumpia came from China, of course, and spread throughout Southeast Asia with the Chinese merchants and population, and so it was a real treat to have a vegetarian *lumpia* meal served by JuD Lao (she of the light/dark/coffee-flavored fruitcake and Chewy Chewkies fame) on her birthday. Assisted by her 16-year-old daughter Jamie, JuD sat us at her kitchen counter, and served first the appetizers for such a meal: luscious fruits gathered from the islands and Southeast Asia. Voila!

Pink Davao *suha* to dip in *champoy* powder; large Thai *sampalok*; watermelon chunks; cantaloupe slices; slices of large Taiwan guavas sugar-pickled, a recipe taught her by Buddhist nuns; golden pineapples from Bicol, and very especially *paho* slices sugar-cured—all of it prime and perfect.

We sat down for lunch at the round, glass-topped dining table with a lazy Susan. The drink was barley tea, with water as an alternative. And then came the luscious parade, with us following JuD's steps and instructions.

- Spread a *lumpia* wrapper on the plate.
- Line it with the two greens—lettuce and *kinchay*—to your taste.
- Sprinkle with ground peanuts, then with dried seaweed mixed with short bits of fried *bihon* and chopped shallots.
- Add in center the principal filling: mixed vegetables, including chopped carrots, *singkamas*, *tokwa*, water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, green beans. At this point be careful not to over-stuff the *lumpia*; be sure you can still wrap it up, pick it up and bite. Even in the US where this is a favored snack, Filipinos are considered real experts at rolling and wrapping.
- Sprinkle with long-tailed Chinese-style bean sprouts.
- Spread over all this a light syrup of *panocha*, *toyo* and cornstarch.
- Sprinkle slices of uncooked young garlic bulbs (*murang bawang*).
- Follow this with chopped young garlic leaves (*murang bawang*).
- Finally, spread the blessing of finely chopped garlic cloves.

Wrap as securely as you can and bite. Enjoy. Dessert consisted of beautiful grapes in bunches and a white fungus soup. Hold the bowl, instructed JuD, not as a begging beggar would, but like a dragon holding on to a pearl. Also, use personal

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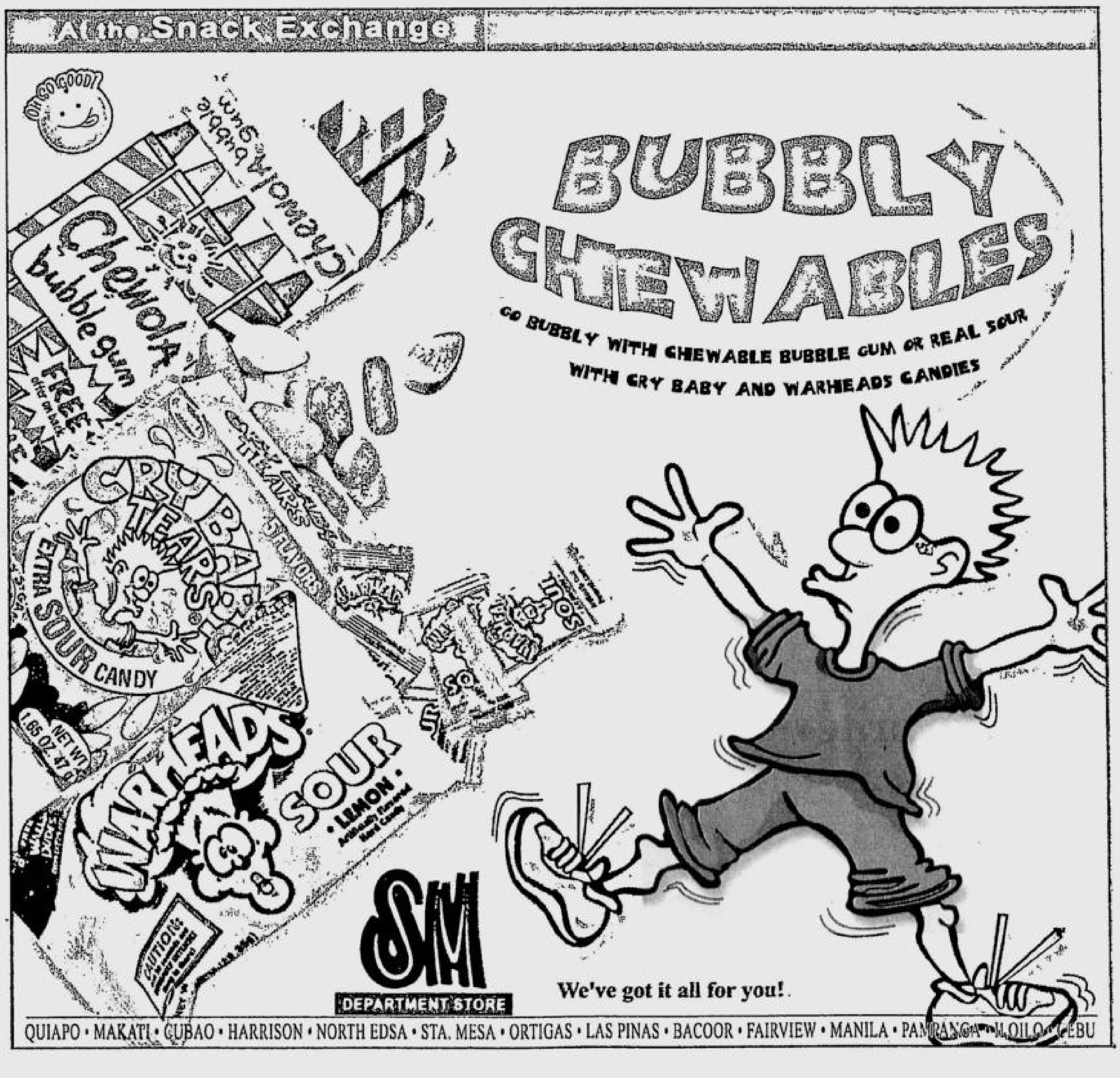

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